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A NIGHT'S DREAM.

BY ST. ELMO.

Oh, morn, your soft and mellow light,
Shrouding the earth in golden mist,
Has called forth thoughts of *one* to-night,
Whose lovely brow you oft have kissed.

Your magic fingers still and cold,
Caress each silver-crested stream,
Leaving behind a trail of gold
That on their bosom seeks to dream.

And 'round my heart, you cast a spell
That binds me closer unto thee,
A few brief hours, and then farewell
To hopes that once were bright and free.

Her eyes, perhaps, in slumber now,
Are wand'ring in the land of dreams,
And maybe thoughts of me, somehow,
Have mingled with your golden beams.

And yet, I would not thus betray
The inmost recess of my heart,
Save that I hope we'll meet some day
In that fair land, no more to part.

Alas, why will my thoughts still wing
Their way across the troubled sea?
Into that deep—remembering,
What might have been, and what might be.

I would not cause one thought of pain,
To leave a trace upon thy brow,
Nor would I seek to lure again
Thoughts that will haunt me even now.

Brief were the moments that we met,
Yet, ah, they were *too* brief for me,
I would that I might now forget,
And crush the phantom memory.

And I had thought that one so fair,
Who had my heart's best treasure won,
At least would not have set the snare,
To wreck my cherished hopes upon.

But vain the dream, I saw your scorn,
Henceforth strangers we must meet,
And thus one heart must ever mourn,
And cease the tide of love to greet.

Go, tell her, moon, the thoughts of her
Are always mingled with my dreams,
Yet stay, I would not have you stir
The tide of pity with your beams.

Softly caress her lovely brow,
And breathe amid her tresses fair,
For to her shrine my heart will bow,
Though well I know 'tis but despair.

So let it be, the waves of Life
Roll slowly onward, by and by
My weary heart will cease the strife,
And I can lay me down—and die.

Thrown forward by the concussion, the lance was plunged deep into the soft skull of the shark.

The Red Rajah:

OR,

THE SCOURGE OF THE INDIES.

A TALE OF THE MALAYAN ISLES.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,

(LAUNCE POYNTZ.)

AUTHOR OF "MUSTANG HUNTERS," "KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," "THE GRIZZLY HUNTERS," "THE BLACK WIZARD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GREAT DEEP.

WE left poor Claude Peyton, so long buffeted about by adverse fortune, in a very perilous position. His boat staved to pieces by a sperm whale; all his companions crushed to death; he was left alone, in the midst of a wilderness of waters, swimming for his life.

For a few minutes, stunned by the suddenness of the calamity, he was hardly conscious of its extent. By the mere instinct of self-preservation, he paddled feebly with his hands to keep himself afloat.

The water was perfectly smooth. The great white moon overhead looked placidly down on what seemed to be a sea of oil. Not a breath of air was stirring. The distant splashing ripple of the great whale, swimming away from the scene of the disaster, soon ceased to be audible, and a dead, solemn silence fell upon the face of the deep.

In a very few minutes the Virginian regained his coolness, and mastered the simple details of his awful position. There he was, all alone, a helpless mortal. The only question was, how long could he keep afloat?

The answer would have been easy enough in fresh water. Not an hour, in all probability.

But, out at sea, the conditions were different. The water of the open ocean is so much greater in density than that of rivers, that a man may float for several hours without much exertion.

But what then? A few hours, more or less, was all the difference. At last he would get tired of even that slight exertion. And then would come the last struggle. The feeble hands groping vainly in the water for support, would find none. The mouth would sink below the surface of the waves, and the last gasping struggle for breath would only hasten the end. The rushing brine would choke the laboring lungs, and down, down, down, down, would go the helpless body, at the mercy of ocean currents and voracious sharks.

As Peyton revolved the dismal thoughts in his mind, a sense of overwhelming misery and terror swept over him. The moon in the sky seemed to reel, and every thing turned dark before his eyes. The taste of the salt waves, entering at mouth and nostrils, and making him gasp and choke, involuntarily recalled him to himself. With a desperte effort, he gained his equilibrium, and tried to throw off the thoughts of danger.

After all, he could swim for hours. If he must die, it was time enough when he was exhausted. Not now, when he was full of vigorous strength. He must keep cool and husband his powers. An American is not made to drown like a rat.

With these thoughts he calmed himself. Beating the water slowly with his feet, he extended his hands on each side, just paddling enough to keep erect. He remembered to have read of the powers of swimming of the Polynesians, who swim nearly upright. The motion he soon discovered to be far less exhausting.

The discovery elated him. He remembered hearing of instances where the savages of the Marquesas had been nearly two days in the water, and surviving.

Why should not a white man do the same? True, he had never studied the art of swimming upright. But he had often seen the Kanakas at Owyhee, swimming about outside the rollers. He would imitate them.

Peyton was a cool, brave man. He would not give up till he was compelled to. He began to progress slowly through the water, keeping a sharp look-out all around him. He fancied that he might very possibly come across some remnants of the wrecked boat. He remembered very well the direction in which the whale had gone. It was straight toward that group of stars just rising in the east. They were now clear of the horizon.

A thrill of hope came through the young Virginian's heart, as he recognized the constellation. It was the brilliant and far-famed Southern Cross. It seemed as if God had set it in the heavens, and made it rise where it did on that night, on purpose to encourage him, alone and unaided as he was.

The sublime words of the Gospel swept through his brain, as he swam steadily on, with his eyes fixed on the fiery cross. "If God careth for the sparrows, how much more shall he care for you, oh! ye of little faith."

Peyton lost all his fears in a moment. He *felt* that he should be saved yet, desperate as his position seemed to be. He swam slowly and steadily on, never relaxing his gaze on the lustrous symbol of Christianity. He made but little effort, and yet advanced all the while.

Alone in the middle of the broad Pacific, he lifted up his heart, and prayed to the God of the universe.

And an answer came to his prayer, when he hardly expected it. Several dark objects became visible ahead of him, and he knew that he was saved.

Swimming more rapidly on, he soon laid his hand on the well-known rounded loom of a floating oar. A cry of thanksgiving and joy burst from his lips, as he clutched the precious timber, and felt its buoyant support.

There were several more floating objects, within a circuit of some fifty yards. Peyton swam about from one to another, gathering them together. They proved to be oars and stretchers, with one or two boards from the wreck of the boat; every thing, in fact, that had not been entangled in the whale-line and carried off by the angry leviathan.

He collected the pieces of wreck together, and felt hopeful. He need not drown now. There was enough timber to make a float, which would carry him half-way out of the water. When he had gathered together five oars, three stretchers, and a piece of board that had been a seat, he spied one more object close to him, bobbing about on the water. It was apparently a round piece of cork. Swimming to it, and pulling it toward him, he discovered that a cord was attached to its under surface. It puzzled him, what it could be.

Remembering, however, that the cord would be useful to bind together his little float, he pulled it along behind him, and swam back. The cord was an especially valuable gift, just now. Then he remembered that he had no means of cutting it. He had come out in the clothes of Captain Briggs, but he had no knife. Indeed his pockets were empty.

"Never mind," said he to himself; "we will find some way, if we have to use our teeth."

So he embraced the bundle of oars and stretchers in his arms, and began to pass the welcome cord around them. But before he had pulled up more than five or six feet of the cord, he found that it was attached at the other end to a stick or pole of some sort. He pulled this slowly up to the surface, and the mystery was explained.

It was a whaling lance.

These weapons are so apt to be dropped into the sea, that a cord and float are kept attached to them in most cases. This very circumstance had caused the rest of the lances to be entangled and carried off with the whale. But the one carried by the unhappy mate had fallen clear in some manner, and now remained to assist our hero.

Peyton gave a shout of joy at the discovery. Only night, he was aware, had saved him, so far, from the attentions of the sharks. When morning came, and those gentry woke up, he would be seen in all probability, and as certainly attacked. And here was a weapon of defense, thrown into his hands quite Providentially. More than ever, he felt that he should be saved. God could not mean to slay him, after such wonderful goodness so far.

He abandoned the intention of making use of the rope. The lance was too precious to be lost, as it might well be if detached from the float.

After a little thought, however, he hit upon a way of fastening his raft together, without the cord. Stripping off his jacket, which he had hitherto retained, he cut and tore it into strips, with the aid of the lance. The blade of a whaling lance is broad and thin, made of the finest steel, and kept to a razor-like edge. He had no difficulty in his task.

Tying the strips together, and making a rope of them, he soon manufactured his little float. Four of the oars he made into a bundle, tied together at each end by stout strips of cloth. The fifth oar he arranged crosswise, in the middle of the other four, so as to stretch out on each side, and keep the bundle from rolling over. The stretchers—short, square pieces of wood, about two feet long—he thrust in at the junction, and placed the piece of board above all.

He had thus manufactured a float on which he could sit astride, and have most of his body above the water. It was not buoyant enough to support his whole weight, standing. The oars were too small. When he stood up, the whole raft was submerged, leaving him up to his ankles in water. His footing was too tottering in that position, also. So he sat down, and let his legs hang in the water. When he did so, the raft rose, and he sat on a board about two inches above the water.

He could do nothing more during the night, but strengthen his raft. He swam about, doing his best to make it strong and compact, sacrificing his vest, and finally his flannel shirt, for the purpose. Before morning, he felt satisfied that his humble little conveyance would stand the ordinary strain of the winds and waves; and, commending himself to the protection of Providence, Claude Peyton fell fast asleep on his raft, extended on the bundle of oars.

When he awoke, it was early dawn. The ocean all round him was curling into little white waves, under a fresh breeze. The red glow of sunrise, spread all over the east, warned him that the day, with its light and its dangers, was fast approaching. Claude shivered as the chilly breeze struck on his bare flesh. Necessity had compelled him to sacrifice all of his clothes except a pair of trowsers, and he was cold. But he soon had other matters to attend to.

Simultaneously with the dawn, the two grand springs of human action exerted their influence over him, excited by the view of different objects. Hope and fear together seized him.

There, in the midst of the rosy eastern glow, a large ship appeared, under all sail, bearing down directly upon him. From the loftiness of her masts, and the immense spread of her sails, compared with the hull, she was evidently a first-class clipper or a man-of-war.

Would she see him or not?

Hope cried out "Yes," and he gave an involuntary cry of joy.

It was checked, the next moment, by another sight.

A sharp, black object, resembling the end of a Turkish scimitar, was gliding across the track between him and the ship. It was the black fin of a shark.

He knew the sea was full of them. He had expected it all the time. And yet the sight of that ghostly, silently-gliding object, sent a cold thrill of dread through his veins.

A shoal of porpoises, a little distance off, were leaping out of the water, chasing each other in clumsy play. Albicores and bonitoes were hunting the flying-fish, beginning their sport with the coming of dawn. But Claude Peyton saw nothing else in all the ocean but that sharp, gliding, black fin, moving to and fro, like a sentry on post.

Had the shark seen him yet or not?

The question was answered a moment after. The black fin suddenly disappeared. Claude watched anxiously for its reappearance. Presently all doubt was removed. There was a ripple in the water, and the shark reappeared, shooting toward the raft like an arrow.

Peyton picked up the lance which had lain on the raft before him, and prepared to defend himself. He well knew the peculiarities of the fish in question, and how a successful defense was possible to a cool man, but he dreaded lest his little float should be injured in the struggle.

The shark swam up to the raft and halted. It appeared to be puzzled at the curious construction. From the cruciform nature of the float, the fish could not get at the man in the center, except by coming in between the arms. Claude could see it plainly now—a large shark, nearly fifteen feet in length.

The monster gave a wag of its screw-like tail, and glided off in a circle round the float. Claude watched it carefully, till it had made the entire circuit, and resumed its original position. Then the animal, as if resolved to make but one rush, turned its great head inward, the dark, green eyes glaring hungrily, and dashed at Peyton's left leg, which hung in the water.

The Virginian was too quick for the shark.

As the creature rushed forward, he lifted his leg, and wheeled swiftly around so as to drop it on the other side, behind the sheltering arms of the cross.

He had inserted two of the boat-stretchers at the intersection, pointing downward, on purpose to be in the way of any such attack.

The shark came on with such a rapid dart that the young man had only time to drop his leg over, when the broad shovel-nose of the creature came up against the cross of the float, with a bump that nearly unsettled the rider.

Thrown forward by the concussion, the lance which he held in his hand was plunged deep into the soft skull of the shark, and nearly buried there. The amazed fish backed off immediately, taking the lance with it, but Peyton managed to clutch the rope in time to prevent losing it.

He hung on like grim death, the shark backing away and shaking with desperate efforts, till the long, smooth blade of the weapon finally dragged out, and left Peyton, erect and triumphant, to haul it in for further operations.

The shark appeared to be disgusted with his trial. The brains were oozing out of a great hole in his head, but he did not appear to be much the worse for it. Still, he did not renew his attack on the float, and our hero could afford time to look around him for the ship.

He could see her plainly now, and not far off, either. Her sternsails and skysails were all spread, and she was coming on like a race-horse, between him and the rising sun.

But he had but a moment to catch the sight. His enemies were not done with him yet. As his gaze swept over the expanse of little curling waves, he was startled by the sight of at least twenty of the well-known sharp, scimitar-like fins, all coming straight for himself.

The telegraphy of the ocean had been at work, and all the hungry sharks in the neighborhood were darting toward their prey.

Claude Peyton felt a sinking at his heart, as he thought of the terrible odds against him, but he buckled manfully to his work, and the fight began.

Up came the ravenous monsters, each eager to be first. But the sight of the raft checked them all. The shark, like his land representatives, the wolf and hyena, is a cowardly scavenger. He fears a trap.

The whole *posse* swam round and round, trying to find an opening. Claude kept a wary watch on their motions. At last, one of them dived down under the raft.

Peyton bent his looks down. He saw the gliding body sweeping round in a graceful curve, and then the monster turned swiftly over, showing its white belly and the gaping jaws far under the broad shovel-nose.

Now was the time.

Drawing up his feet, the young man plunged the keen lance down into the middle of the white belly, and drew it up, red with blood.

A great gash appeared in the shark, and the creature withdrew hurriedly, with its entrails protruding from the wound.

But Claude had hardly time to withdraw his weapon, when a second shark made a rush at his leg, in the corner of the float.

With an involuntary shout of terror, the Virginian withdrew it hastily, and darted the lance into his assailant's eye. The shark wriggled back desperately, only to give place to another on the other side.

The creatures were ravenously hungry, and grew bolder every moment. The whole attention of Claude was taken up in repelling their attacks, and he had the hardest work to maintain his balance. Again and again he escaped the snap of the sharp teeth only by a hair's breadth. If it had not been for his whaling-lance, he would have fared badly. That trusty weapon was all red with blood, and had been plunged into the bodies of six or seven sharks. But Peyton was growing weak with excitement and hard work. He could hardly ply his lance any longer. He dreaded the attack of the next shark, and still more, lest all of them should come together.

And together they were all coming, at last. Peyton shouted aloud with all his might, and splashed the water, in hopes to frighten off his hungry besiegers. They recoiled a little, and then swam closer in, stealthily and ominously, in a circle of hungry jaws and glaring eyes. A nightmare spell seemed to be cast over the beleaguered one. He stared stupidly at the circle of fierce eyes, without the power of motion.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAND OF THE MALAY.

JUST at the very instant when all seemed lost, when our hero, weak and exhausted, could defend himself no longer, the regular thud and splash of oars came down on the breeze, and Peyton saw the sharks waver. The next minute, a loud shout from twenty throats close to them, followed by the rush of a large man-of-war's boat, scattered the cowardly creatures like a pack of curs.

Claude uttered a fervent "Thank God!" and turned round, to behold a long black boat full of men, steered by an officer with a gold band round his cap, and over the stern-sheets fluttered the flag of his own land, the glorious stars and stripes!

The sight was so unexpected, so utterly astounding, that Peyton hardly believed his eyes for a moment. But he was reassured by the friendly voice of the midshipman in the boat, addressing him in his own language.

"You seem to have had a hard time of it, messmate. We put out the boat just in time."

"You did, indeed," was all that our hero could say.

He was so exhausted that they had to lift him into the boat.

Once there, however, and on his way to the ship, which was hove-to, a few cable-lengths off, he quickly recovered. A drink of spirits put sufficient life in him to hear and answer the remarks of the midshipman.

"The look-out saw you first," explained the officer. "When the skipper heard of it, he ordered the jolly-boat ready. Then the look-out reported that you were at work fighting sharks, and the old man hove-to, and told us to pull like heroes. And so we did. Why, you don't appear to be hurt much."

"I am not," said Peyton; "only a little exhausted; and I'll be better presently. What is your vessel's name?"

"The Comanche," replied the lad. "She's a real clipper under canvas, and we carry a screw, too. Where do you hail from, old fellow?"

"That's rather a long story, young gentleman," said Claude, dryly. "I've been knocked about the world so infernally that I hardly know where I did come from. What's your captain's name?"

"Captain Pendleton," replied the youngster, stiffly. He did not like being called "young" by this half-naked stranger, picked up in mid-ocean. Besides, his curiosity had been balked by the other, and he resented that.

"Pendleton," repeated Peyton, thoughtfully; "I ought to know him. What is his Christian name?"

The midshipman stared aghast. Here was this unknown nobody, probably a foremast hand, claiming the acquaintance of the magnificent Captain Pendleton! Impudence!

"I think it's hardly probable, my man," he began, loftily, "that you are acquainted with Captain Pendleton. I don't think that he associates with men of your stamp."

Peyton smiled.

"How do you know what my stamp may be, young man?" he asked. "You may be mistaken, you know. If your captain is Horace Pendleton, of Maryland, he and I went to school together, and graduated at Annapolis, when you were in long-clothes."

The conceited young officer held his peace. He began to doubt whether the stranger *was* only a foremast hand, after all.

When they arrived at the side of the Comanche, and the stranger mounted the side-ladder, his doubts were very soon removed.

As a matter of course, the shipwrecked or rescued man was at once brought before the captain, and the midshipman had the pleasure of seeing a delighted and astonished recognition take place.

The captain was indeed Claude's old friend, Horace Pendleton; and the two had not seen each other since the time when they had served together as "middies" in the same ship. Claude had resigned, after a few years' service, to accept a large fortune left him by an uncle in Baltimore; and Pendleton had risen to the rank of commander.

"Why, Claude Peyton, my dear old friend!" exclaimed the delighted Pendleton; "you have dropped from heaven, or sprung out of the sea, to comfort my loneliness. I swear I never was so glad to see a man in all my life. Gentlemen, this is my old friend, Mr. Peyton, my classmate at Annapolis, fifteen years ago. He has sprung from the sea in the nick of time. Claude, old fellow, come right into my cabin, as quick as ever you can, and let's get some decent clothes on you. Why, man, where have you been? Never mind! Come along."

And he carried off Claude in triumph to his cabin, where, for the second time in twenty-four hours, that much-buffeted individual was accommodated with a new suit of clothes.

During his toilet, and after, he gave a succinct account of his adventures since he last saw his friend Pendleton, and the latter was wonderstruck.

Claude was introduced to the officers of the Comanche, and found them very pleasant fellows, now that they knew him to be the friend of their captain. They were, of course, more or less affected with that supercilious self-conceit so common among the army and navy officers of the regular services. They imagined themselves the salt of the earth, and voted every one outside of their charmed circle nobodies; but once recognized, and on friendly terms, they were very nice fellows.

The Comanche was under orders to cruise among the outer Malay Islands for awhile, after which she was to proceed to Singapore, and thence to Calcutta.

When she so fortunately came across Peyton she had already been on the station some months, and was on her way to Singapore. Claude was very glad to hear this news. He had experienced so many trials within the year, that he was by no means sorry to get among the comforts of civilization again. He made a pleasant trip through the Spice Islands, with his old friend Pendleton, and finally found himself at anchor in the magnificent harbor of Singapore.

Peyton had visited this remarkable place before, but the view appeared to him as fresh as ever, as he stood on the quarter-deck of the Comanche, waiting for the captain's gig to take him ashore. Opposite to him was the broad esplanade in front of the town, which lay reposing against the side of a gentle slope, and backed by lofty hills. The aspect of the buildings was full of picturesque romance, for Singapore lies in the heart of the East, between the Arabs and Hindoos on one side, and the Mongolians and Malays on the other.

When they went ashore, Peyton soon found a hearty welcome at the house of Mr. Earle, the resident partner of the house of Earle, Hoskins & Co., of Calcutta, Singapore, Canton, London, and New York, to whom he was well known in former times.

Mr. Earle was a large florid Englishman, hard-headed and business-like. He had but one God—the almighty dollar; but one love on earth—his daughter. Of low and vulgar extraction himself, originally (his real name was Boggs, and he had taken his wife's name for her fortune), it was yet his prime ambition to see his daughter mated to some distinguished person, who could place her in SOCIETY.

"You see, sir," he observed, very frankly, to Peyton, whom he admired immensely, as a man of some wealth, and still more, of excellent family; "when my Julia marries, she'll bring the man as gets her a plum—yes, sir, a plum*—and I've made up my mind as 'ow she shall 'ave a real gentleman—none of your stuck-up snobs, as can't show a pedigree, but a feller as can tell 'oo his great-grandfather's great-grandfather was, *h*all the way up to the Conqueror."

It will be perceived, from the above, that Mr. Earle's aspirates were frequently neglected, and from the tone of his speech it may also be inferred that it was after dinner.

This was the fact. Pendleton and Claude had accepted the worthy merchant's invitation to "cut mutton" with him, as he termed it, and the three gentlemen were enjoying their cheroots after dinner, in the absence of the lady now under discussion.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 92.)

The Mustangers:

A TALE OF THE CROSS TIMBERS.

CHAPTER XIII.

OLD WASH SCENTS THE TRAIL.

COLONEL MAGOFFIN was standing under a tree, with Wash Carrol, eating a hasty lunch of bread and ham, and complacently surveying the progress of the block-house. Working with a will as they had been, fourteen pairs of hands had done a great deal of work in a small time. Already the heavy timbers, smoothed at top and bottom, and deeply notched at the corners of the structure, had risen in a firm, bullet-proof wall to a hight of seven or eight feet, and the top timbers, with rows of auger-holes to serve as loop-holes, were nearly ready to put on.

The workmen were sitting round, eating their dinner, and cracking jokes, one with another, with all the careless gayety of their race. The wagons had been hitched up and moved down close to the block-house, as suggested in the morning, and the women were busily engaged in transferring all the moveables into the inclosure, for protection. Since he had heard of Tiger Tail's strange demeanor in the morning, the colonel had determined not to let another night pass without having his precious treasures under shelter.

"We needn't put a roof on the house just yet, Wash," he said. "If we carry up the timbers a little higher, we can make a parapet to shelter behind, and put all our force to work on a stockade to protect the cattle."

"Guess we'll hev time, cunnel," said old Wash. "Injuns is plaguy cowardly critters, arter all, and it takes 'em a heap o' time ter make up thar mind to fight. Afore Tiger Tail's ready for us, mebbe we mout be ready for him, more'n he thunk of. But we hain't no time to lose. I don't like the way the pesky young varmint looked at the young ladies. Gosh! cunnel, your darter does clip it on that buckskin mar'! She rides e'ena'most like a Comanche."

The exclamation was elicited by the sight of Tennessee Magoffin, already mounted on the pretty cream-colored mare Wash had tamed for her, and careering round and round the meadow, between them and the old camp, like a hawk on the wing. Tennie rode, like many another girl in the sunny South, as if she was born to the saddle. Her cousin could be seen, close by, preparing to mount the white mare, spotted with black, which Edward Thornley was holding for her. The pretty creature stood trembling under the sharp twitch of the *hakimo*, a peculiar noose around the nose and under-jaw, used by the Mexicans and mustangers, under which the wildest horse generally becomes submissive.

Southerners, like the Magoffins, had, of course, brought side-saddles with them, even though they had not had the mounts to put them on. With a light and active spring Louisiana Dupre leaped from Thornley's assisting hand to her seat, and gathered up her reins.

Thornley untwisted the *hakimo* which was outside of the bridle, and the half-tamed mustang made a great leap, and sprung forward in a mad race. Half-tamed, we say, but it is all the taming nine horses out of ten get in Texas. A good choke, half an hour's fight with a pair of spurs a foot long, and a remorseless centaur to use them, and the creature gives in, and is pronounced "*domado*"—tamed. But Louisiana Dupre was as good a rider, almost, as her cousin Tennie, and soon brought her spotted mare to submission. The exercise had brought the color to her cheek, the fire to her eye, and all her melancholy was gone for the nonce, as she galloped up to the colonel and inquired:

"How do you like my mare, uncle? Isn't she splendid?"

"Very pretty, indeed, my dear," said the colonel, patting the mare's neck. "You ride splendidly, Louie."

"Thank you, sir," she said. "Now, I think I'll ride over and look after Eugene. The poor boy may be hungry, for I don't believe he'll shoot much here."

"I heard his gun and Strother's half an hour ago," answered the colonel. "I guess they must have killed something, for Strother's an old hand at decoying turkeys. They ought to be here now pretty soon."

At this minute, Tennessee Magoffin came racing up at full speed, and checked her horse abruptly opposite.

"Father," she said, eagerly, her face full of anxiety, "Mr. Strother's coming across the river leading Eugene's horse, and I don't see Eugene. Something has happened to him, I'm certain. Perhaps he's hurt himself. He always is so venturesome. Oh! father, if he should be hurt!"

"Nonsense, you silly child," said the colonel, a little uneasy nevertheless. "They shot too much game to carry, I suppose, and Eugene has stayed by it to keep it from the coyotes. Don't be frightened about nothing."

"Oh! do you think so?" said Tennie, relieved. "I'll go down right off and ask Mr. Strother."

"Don't ye do it, Miss Tennie," cried old Wash, earnestly; "that ar' bank ain't fit fur a lady to ride down, leave alone on a fresh-caught hoss. I'm a-goin'. Don't you do it for your *life*, I say."

The old hunter's eager manner impressed Tennie so much that she unwillingly remained where she was, while old Wash plunged down the bank on foot, a prey to anxiety he had hidden successfully.

"What are it, neighbor?" he asked, eagerly, as Strother slowly rode up to the bank through the ford; "are any thing happe'd to the young 'un? Whar' is he?"

"Gone!" said Strother, with a hollow groan; "gone! And snapped up by them hell-hounds of Injins, I b'lieve. 'Twarn't a half-hour ago, as we parted t'other side o' that motte. He went one way, I t'other, round. I heerd his gun and went thar'. Hyar's all I found."

And he exhibited the elegant silver-mounted fowling-piece, which Eugene had taken so much pride in that very day.

"Take me to the place," said Wash, eagerly. "Durn the gobblers. Throw 'em down hyar, and I'll take his hoss. You and me, neighbor, we'll ferret out who did this deviltry afore we're a day older. Weepins in order, say?"

"You bet," replied Strother, laconically. The advent of a brother spirit as keen as Wash Carrol, had altered the look of affairs to his apprehension. He threw down the turkeys on the ground, and Wash Carrol jumped on the pretty thorough-bred that had been Eugene's, and rode back into the ford.

"What 'll the colonel say?" suddenly asked Strother, pausing. "Hadn't we oughter go back and tell him fust?"

"Whar's the use?" said Wash, gruffly. "He'll know it soon 'nuff. Bad news flies, neighbor. Besides, he knows me well enough ter trust me ter do the squar' thing."

And so the two hunters, one so gigantic, the other so diminutive, pursued their way in company over the stream and rode together to the place where Strother had found the abandoned gun.

Here Wash Carrol leaped to the ground, throwing the bridle of his horse to his companion.

He went down on his hands and knees, and examined the tracks all round with the closest attention, even snuffing at them as a hound might. Strother carefully and silently kept the two horses back from interfering with his movements, and watched him with close attention as a connoisseur in the art.

Finally Wash rose to his feet as if satisfied, and followed the horse tracks for about twenty feet, when he halted.

"What di *you* make o' this hyar, neighbor?" he demanded, turning to Strother.

The overseer laconically answered: "Injuns lassoed him."

"Ay; any fool c'u'd tell that," replied Carrol; "but 'tain't every one as could tell this hyar blood warn't *his'n*."

"How d'yer know?" asked the overseer, incredulously.

"'Cause why. Don't ye see these hyar forefeet is plum above that ar' pool, and the drops go on the track all on one side. Now, ef it had 'a' been *his'n* 'twould 'a' been hyar, whar' they dragged his body nigh twenty feet over the grass. No, that ar' blood's hosse's blood. They must 'a' come on him suddint-like, so he fired in a hurry and mebbe hit one of thar hosses a skelp. Then they twitched him with the larryett, and put like sixty to git behind that ar' motte. Thar's whar' we've got to go. Got a six-shooter?"

"You bet!" replied the overseer, in his usual laconic style, exhibiting the weapon, at that time not near as common as now.

"Let's git, then!" was Wash's remark, as he loosened his own revolver in the holster, and cocked his rifle. Then he started off on the trail of the horses at a jog-trot, Strother following with the two steeds.

"Took him up hyar," remarked Wash, as the broad track that had been made by poor Eugene's body suddenly ceased. "Only three on 'em, all told."

And he pointed to the tracks of three horses of different sizes, but all evidently unshod, that composed the trail to the motte.

"Thur mustangs—hey?" said Strother, interrogatively, as he marked the three tracks.

"Yes. Thur mustangs," answered Wash, in an abstracted tone. But he did not seem to be at all satisfied on the subject. He went on slowly muttering to himself, and finally turned round, and said:

"Neighbor, air you *some* on a trail?"

"Kudn't say I are," replied Strother, modestly; "I hev done a wheen of it in my time, howsumdever."

"Tell me," said Wash, pausing, "what's the differ atween a white man's and a Injun's ridin'?"

"White man keeps his hoss more on his hunkies," said the overseer, promptly, "special if he be a greaser. Injun goes lollopy-lollop."

"Good!" said Wash, with a grunt. "Neighbor, you *are* some on a trail. You ar' got gumption, you hev. Git down hyar, and take a squint, and tell me what you think o' this 'ere."

And he pointed to something on the track which Strother could not see from his horse's back. The overseer got down from his animal, and examined the trail closely.

"See hyar," said Wash, pointing to the tracks as he spoke to illustrate his meaning, "hyar are three hoss-tracks. Two on 'em is even, but this hyar goes deeper ahint than afore. So I say, that ar' hoss war ridden by a white man with a sharp bit. What d'ye think, neighbor?"

"Looks reasonable," admitted Strother; "but, how does a white man come hyar, consortin' with Injuns?"

"There are sich cusses as him a'most enywheers," said Wash, gravely; "morely, we've got a pardner down at the corral, as me and Ed hev suspicioned a long time. Say, neighbor, war ye ever in Loozyanny?"

He asked the question with curious abruptness, and the overseer answered it with his usual brevity.

"You bet."

"Did ye ever know a cuss thar of the name of Louis Lebar! A short, chunky fellow, a'most as black as a nigger, with a black beard over his face. Mout 'a' bin a Portugee, from his looks."

"No!" said Strother, briefly.

Wash looked a little disappointed. He threw up his rifle on his shoulder, and marched off along the track in silence, till they were close to the motte of timber.

"Look out, neighbor," growled Strother; "mout be Injuns in thar. Best git on yer hoss. Track 's plain 'nuff."

Wash Carrol made no answer. He hastened forward, still on foot, with his rifle ready to fire at a moment's notice. He saw at the corner of the motte something which promised a clew.

A clew it was, plain enough.

The very identical plug of tobacco which Tiger Tail had received from Colonel Magoffin, lay there in the grass, amid the confused trampling footsteps of a number of horses.

"Tiger Tail, by the jumping Jehosaphat!" cried Wash. "Now, don't you git into no sweat, neighbor; we'll hev that boy back before long, or I'm durned. That's fair! I know whar he is. He ain't kilt—he ain't. He's only gobbled, to see ef they kain't git some ransom out of the cunnel. The or'nary! Guess I know a trick wuth two o' his. Look hyar, neighbor! The hull band was hyar waitin', and they've vamoosed the ranche as soon as they got the young feller safe. Thar's the track, straight into Tiger Tail's camp."

And he pointed to a broad, plain trail of many hoofs that led off from the corner of the track straight to the Cross Timbers.

"How many fellers has this Tiger Tail?" asked Strother of his companion, as they stood watching the track.

"'Bout a hundred and fifty," said Wash.

"Why shedn't we make a party, and ride into the cuss's hole, and make him give up the young feller?" demanded Strother.

Wash turned eagerly round.

"Will you make one of sich a party, neighbor?" he asked.

"I will that!" replied Strother, emphatically. "We've got our weepins, and no one ain't a-goin' through us so durned quick as this comes to. Cum, stranger, let's be hoofin' it. We'll hev bad news and good to tell the cunnel, but we mout as well git all the help we kin, fur 'twon't be so easy to skeer that 'ere Tiger Tail, without four or five six-shooters a-pointin' at his head."

"Neighbor, you're a hoss!" said Wash, heartily. "Give us yer claw."

The gigantic Tennesseean grasped the other's hand with a force that made it tingle. He and Wash remounted their horses and galloped back to camp, where they found all in the greatest commotion. Tennie Magoffin was wild with apprehension, and the colonel had all his men armed, and ready for an assault. When Wash and Strother rode into camp, and told their story, proposing the plan, there was not a dissentient voice in the whole party.

Putting the women into the half completed block-house, and consigning them to the care of four well-armed negroes, the colonel, Strother, Thornley, Carrol, and eight of the negroes, all armed to the teeth, set off to beard the tiger in his den.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BLACK STALLION.

IN a deep recess or bay, formed by two jutting projections or spurs of the Cross Timbers, lay the camp of the vagabond Seminole chief. It was surrounded on all sides, except the front, by the low, scrubby vegetation of the Timbers. Close-stunted oak, hickory, and black jack, rising to an average hight of about twelve feet, and closely covered below with thorny underbrush, formed a curtain of defense, impenetrable except with the ax. Within the bay, which might have contained some fifty acres, was spread the camp of Tiger Tail, numbering between fifty and sixty lodges.

The tent of the chief himself was dignified by a pole in front, on which dangled a row of scalps, the flowing light hair on more than one attesting that it had been torn from the head of a white woman. Tiger Tail's lodge was of the largest kind, and contained over a dozen women of various degrees of comeliness, for the Seminoles are a handsome race of Indians. Several of them were lounging round the door, nursing papooses, and watching the boys of the camp at play on the green in front.

The camp was almost denuded of warriors, and there were but few horses feeding outside; but the word had just been passed that Tiger Tail was returning, and the urchins of the camp ran yelling out to welcome the warriors.

In they came at full gallop, brandishing their spears, and yelling for triumph, headed by the chief himself, who bore across his horse's withers a bound and helpless form.

Tiger Tail rode up to his lodge, and threw himself from his horse, when he roughly pulled off the prisoner, and dropped him on the ground, like a bale of goods.

Then it might be seen that the captive was a white man, dressed in the blue cottonade blouse and trowsers of a Louisiana Creole, his head swathed in a red blanket, that completely blinded him. The next man to Tiger Tail was the Black Mustanger, riding a freshly-caught wild horse, of great beauty, which he checked on its haunches, with a powerful Spanish bit, as he said, in a low voice:

"I must go now, chief. Keep him safe, and on no account let him know that I am your friend. I will disarm suspicion by going to the corral. Those fools will never find out. Remember, to-night, before they get their block-house ready. Good-by. I will take the short cut through the timber."

"Good!" said Tiger Tail, briefly; "my young men will be there."

Lebar dashed the spurs into his horse's sides, and galloped off to the very end of the bay. Here several narrow paths were to be seen, that had been cut through the underbrush, in past times, by the Seminoles, as a means of escape if they were attacked by superior forces. One and all were quite invisible until you were close to them.

Lebar appeared to know his way well, for he chose one of the paths without any hesitation, and forced the unwilling horse to his utmost speed along the narrow, tortuous way.

In ten minutes' rapid riding he gained the edge of the Cross Timbers, at another point, and beheld before him, at a mile's distance, the mustanger's corral, of which he was supposed to be in charge.

A glance assured him that the corral was intact, and the captured herd still safe, and then he tore away toward them at the best speed the maddened mustang was capable of, and reached the gate in about two minutes.

Here he pulled up the horse with such a jerk of the bit, that the animal reared violently up, pawed the air for a moment, and went over backward to the ground.

But Lebar, though a poor hand with the lasso, was by no means a bad rider. He slipped out of the saddle, and stood by the fallen steed, unhurt, as the poor creature, trembling and exhausted, arose, and stood quaking and covered with sweat before his conqueror.

The Black Mustanger took down the bars, and led the horse into the corral, turning him loose, after unsaddling, all reeking as he was.

"Lucky for me those fellows haven't come back," he said to himself, as he looked at the exhausted animal. "They might have suspected something, if they had seen me galloping about out there. I wonder how long it will be before they find out the loss of young Dupre? Curse him! I'll have him killed, for what he said to me once. Thank Heaven! he didn't see me. If Tiger Tail lets him go for a ransom, it would have been awkward if he had recognized me. Old Magoffin might have pulled up stakes, and gone for those Regulators, and where should I have gone, then? No one at that camp knows me, except her and her brother. The rest are all Tennesseeans. Heigho! It's slow work waiting for those two fellows. Wonder what they can find so interesting at the Magoffins' camp?"

He went to the top of one of the swells, and looked out in the direction of the emigrant encampment. For some time nothing was to be seen, but at last he caught a glimpse of a horseman's head, followed by several others, coming over the top of a swell, several miles off, and heading toward Tiger Tail's camp, by the prairie way.

By this path, the distance from Magoffin's to the Seminole village was at least six miles, whereas by the short cut through the Cross Timbers, of which Lebar alone knew, it was only about two and a half.

The Black Mustanger watched the cavalcade with close attention, counting the numbers. He counted twelve figures, and recognized the diminutive figure of Wash Carrol, and the huge form of the overseer in the advance.

"They've found it out," muttered Lebar, excitedly. "They must be going in search of him. Perhaps to offer Tiger Tail a heavy ransom. Ha! ha! He'll ask enough to sicken old Magoffin of the Cross Timbers. I've primed him well."

He continued to watch the distant horsemen, who were going at a loping gallop, straight toward Tiger Tail's village, till they were hidden from sight by a swell of land.

"I wonder what they'll say to the chief?" muttered he. "If he only knew they were coming, he might arrange a surprise for them. Why not? I'm the nearest still, by four miles, and I can warn them in time. Why shouldn't we bag the whole crowd of them, Wash Carrol and all? Then I might be rich. By Heavens! 'tis a good plan! I'll try it. But I shall need a swift horse in case there's any hitch. My own beast is good, but he's only a mule. I guess I'll catch a fresh mustang. I'll have plenty of time."

The Black Mustanger turned round and picked up his long lariat from where it lay by his saddle. He climbed over the bars of the gate, and advanced toward the captured herd, which was quietly feeding near the pond. His appearance produced a stampede as usual, and again the animals huddled together against the fence in the corner, kicking and squealing. Lebar selected his mark, a fine steel-gray young stallion, and advanced close to the herd.

But he was by no means skillful enough with the lasso. In order to keep the noose open, he whirled it round his head, and increased the terror of the horses to such an extent by the gesture that they broke loose from the corner and made a mad plunge past him in wild terror. As they dashed by, Lebar threw his lasso with no very accurate aim into the midst of the sea of tossing heads. The next minute he felt himself jerked from the ground, the rope cutting into his waist, while he was dragged along for the whole length of the corral, receiving many bruises in the operation, till the frantic horse stopped in the corner of the corral, backing away to the end of his tether.

Lebar gathered himself up, cursing furiously. He was a man of great personal strength and savage temper, and from that moment forgot every thing, for some time, but his desire of revenge on the horse. He found that he had lassoed a splendid black stallion by accident, one of the leaders of the herd, the noose having caught the wild horse round the neck, where it had slipped up close to his head.

"I'll fix you, curse you!" bellowed the infuriated mustanger, as he rose to his feet, smarting from his wounds, and began to pull up, by main force, to the frightened horse. But his furious gestures produced a bad result. The wild horse, to be approached successfully, needs caution and patience, and Lebar's gestures frightened the wild stallion to such an extent that he made a second desperate break away to the middle of the corral, dragging the Black Mustanger after him, in spite of his desperate struggles to hold back. It was not for fully ten minutes that Lebar could get near him, and then the horse dropped on the earth, nearly dead from suffocation.

The mustanger came up, hand-over-hand, and loosened the noose to allow the horse to breathe. He began to wish he had taken his slow old mule, after all, but it was too late now. He must make up for lost time by fast riding. When he loosened the noose, the wild stallion slowly rose, with an air of bewilderment, and made but little resistance on his way to the gate. Lebar let down the rails, and the stallion bounded through the opening with a joyful neigh, nearly dragging the mustanger off his feet again in his efforts to escape. He did drag him so far from the gate that Lebar had no time to put up the barrier again, till the stallion fell a second time from strangulation. But the Black Mustanger had recovered his coolness, and secured the lasso to a tree before he liberated the animal, when he left him to rise, while he put up the bars again.

"Curse you!" he muttered, vindictively, as he again approached the horse, with his saddle over his arm; "you shall pay for this presently."

But, as if in scorn of his words, the black stallion let fly both heels at him, as he approached, with a violence that would have ended Louis Lebar's days then and there but for a timely spring backward.

Then the mustanger did what he ought to have done at first. He hauled on the lasso for the third time, and pulled up to the horse's head, the animal straining chokingly on the cord, till he got near enough to put his hand over the creature's nose and breathe into its nostrils. The effect on the wild horse was apparent. It ceased to struggle, and submitted, trembling, to be saddled, while Lebar inserted the noose of the *hakimo* into its mouth, twitching the under jaw and nose with merciless violence.

With all his best endeavors, however, imitating the tactics of Carrol as near as he

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* Vulgar Anglicism for £100,000.

knew how, it was fully a quarter of an hour more of struggles, all of them induced by his own clumsiness and savage violence, before he at last succeeded in throwing his leg over the back of the wild stallion, with a bridle in its mouth.

When he did, the real struggle commenced. No longer under the choking restraint of the *hakamo*, the wild steed was at full liberty to use its best efforts to unseat its rider. It proceeded to use them as well as it knew how.

Back jumps from the ground with all four legs stiff, a combination of the leap and a kick in the air, whirls round and round, standing almost erect on the hind legs, only to make a spring from them; all these various tricks did the wild horse try.

Lebar kept a tight grip on the pommel of the saddle or the floating mane of the horse, and managed to retain his seat, though with great difficulty, answering every effort of the charger with a fresh dig of his huge spurs.

He did not ride like a Mexican *vaquero.* The latter would have sat erect like a tower, with loose bridle, laughing at the horse's mad efforts, secure in his seat. But he did ride sufficiently well to stick on somehow, till the stallion had exhausted himself, when the Black Mustanger drove in the spurs for the last time, and sent his charger off in a wild burst of speed toward the hidden path in the Cross Timbers.

Once the wild horse is got to his speed, his conquest is certain. The harder he runs, the quicker will he exhaust himself. Lebar smiled grimly as he wiped the sweat from his dark, forbidding-looking face, and spurred the conquered beast harder than ever.

The creature seemed to fly over the prairie, and less than two minutes brought him to the secret path, into which his rider dashed. Once out of sight in the scrub timber, however, Lebar began to draw on the bit, and brought his animal to a slower gallop, under which he arrived at the Seminole camp.

When he pulled up at the edge of the clearing, he saw that he was too late. The party of white men was just riding into the camp.

CHAPTER XV.

BEARDING THE TIGER.

"Now, cunnel," said Wash Carrol, in a low tone, as he rode into the outskirts of the Seminole camp, "you jest leave this hyar biz to me. I know this hyar sneakin' cuss well. Will yer do as I tell yer?"

"I will, Wash, on the honor of a gentleman," said the colonel, earnestly. "You know the Indians better than I do. But, oh! Wash, suppose they've killed him! How shall I ever face his poor sister again?"

"He ain't dead, cunnel; I'll swar't. Ef they'd 'a' killed him, we'd 'a' found his karkidge, already skulped. Leave 't ter me and my neighbor hyar, and do as we does or tells yer."

The colonel nodded silently, and the little party rode into the camp of the Seminoles, silently, and unwelcomed.

The presence of numerous horses outside announced that the warriors were in camp, and they could be seen, lounging in the sun at the doors of their lodges, smoking pipes. Not a single motion was made, as the white men and negroes rode in; but they were met with scowling and lowering glances on every side. The Seminole warriors glanced sullenly up from their groups, and muttered gutturals to each other.

Wash Carrol rode on, his keen eye glancing furtively on every side, entirely aware of the danger he was running, but equally resolved to meet it at any cost. He rode straight up to the lodge of Tiger Tail, and found the chief sitting on the ground, surrounded by his squaws, smoking.

"Now, cunnel," said Wash, hurriedly, "you and your crowd stay on hossback; keep your eyes skinned, and be ready to blaze away into the cusses when I gives the word. Me and my neighbor, hyar, will do the torking."

He leisurely dismounted from his horse, along with Strother, and the two advanced to the chief's front, with their rifles thrown back over the hollow of the left arm, while the butt of a revolver lay ready to the right hand of each.

Tiger Tail continued smoking, as if totally unconscious of their presence. Wash Carrol drew from his belt the very same plug of tobacco which he had found by the motte-side, all trampled with horse-hoofs as it was, and threw it down at the chief's feet.

"Whar do you think I found that, chief?" he asked, abruptly.

Tiger Tail looked up for the first time, and gave a grunt. It was his only answer.

"I found it by the tracks that told me as how you'd been a-stealin' away the young white chief," said Wash, firmly. "Where have you got him?"

Tiger Tail gave another grunt. His eyes burned like live coals as he surveyed the puny frame of the hunter, but his look ended in a smile of contempt, as he said:

"Who you, anyway?"

Wash turned a little red, and his eyes twinkled with anger, but his prairie education had brought his passions under too complete control for him to suffer his temper to lose him a point. He nodded to the gigantic overseer, who advanced and took up the word. Strother's deep voice, like the growl of a bear, addressed the Indian.

"See hyar, you! You come to our camp this mornin' and we treated yer like a gentleman, didn't we? Answer that, ef ye kin say!"

Tiger Tail grunted contemptuously.

"No," he said; "want whisky and powder. Much heap. Get bit blanket, lilly bit 'baccer. Ugh!"

"We guv ye what we could," said Strother. "We hed no whisky to spar'. Well, what hev ye done? Ye've gone and stole away jest the nicest young feller as lives in this hyar State, and ye've put his family into mournin' for fear ye mout hev killed him. What did yer do it for, *say?*"

"Whar is he, *say?*" demanded Wash Carrol in his turn.

As the two hunters spoke, they advanced closer to the chief, and each grounded the butt of his rifle, holding the barrel in his left hand. Tiger Tail's eyes blazed again, but he made no sign of moving yet. He felt too secure in the numbers of his warriors, and never dreamed of the desperate courage of the whites. His lip curled in an insolent smile, as he said:

"Want much heap whisky, much powder for him."

Wash Carrol made a rapid signal with his eyes to Strother. The next moment the giant's grasp was on the chief's shoulder, thence transferred to his long hair, by which he plucked him to his feet as if he had been a child. The cold muzzle of a revolver was pressed against the Indian's temple, as Wash hissed forth:

"Call fur help, and I'll scatter yer brains over yer squaws, darn yer painted skin. WHAR'S THAT BOY?"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 91.)

The Dark Secret:

OR,

The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON,

(MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING.)

CHAPTER XIV—CONTINUED.

WITH this charitable apostrophe, Captain Disbrowe, becoming suddenly aware that the breakfast-bell had rung, went downstairs, and encountered the object of all his thoughts and perplexity crossing the hall, laughing merrily with Jacinto, and looking bright, saucy and piquant as ever. Gayly saluting him, she fixed her eyes on his face, and exclaimed:

"Why, cousin Alf, what's the matter? You look as if you had seen a ghost last night, or had an attack of the nightmare! Just look at him, Jacinto! What has happened, my dear cousin?"

"Nothing much. I have had bad dreams."

"And bad dreams have been powerful enough to give that look to the face of the most high, puissant, and illustrious Captain Disbrowe? Whew? What were they about, cousin Alfred? I am a regular female edition of Joseph for interpreting dreams."

"Well, they were of—you."

"Indeed! Dear me, how flattered I feel! And what did you dream of me, coz?"

"That you and somebody else were plotting to be the death of me."

"Possible? I shouldn't wonder if it came true, too! Who was the other?"

He fixed his eyes keenly on her face.

"Old Grizzle Howlet!"

She started with a shock, and looked at him. He had expected she would, and met her gaze carelessly.

"Indeed! *indeed!*" she said, sharply. "Perhaps you also dreamed where this meeting took place?"

"Certainly. When I *do* dream, I always pay attention to it, and omit no detail. It was somewhere in an old, deserted room, I believe."

"Ah!" she said, with a paling cheek, and a rising fire in her eye. "Perhaps you can also tell me what we said?"

There was something so sharp, suspicious, and angry, in her tone, that Jacinto looked at her in extreme surprise.

"Why, Jacquetta!" he exclaimed.

Disbrowe's face flushed, and his eye flashed with a jealous fire. To hear this handsome boy call her Jacquetta so familiarly, to watch her as she leaned on his arm, as she had never consented to do on his, was galling in the extreme.

"What did we say?" repeated Jacquetta, imperiously.

"Really, Miss Jacquetta," he said, half-coldly, "one would think I was describing a reality instead of a dream. How can I tell what you said? Who can remember what is said in a dream?"

"Such a remarkable dream! you surely can," she said—two red spots, that only anger or deep excitement could ever call there, burning in either cheek.

"No; I can not. And I do not see any thing remarkable in your meeting the old lady," he said, in an indifferent tone.

"Nor in our plotting to murder you—stranger things have happened. Are you sure you locked your chamber-door last night on retiring, Captain Disbrowe?"

"A singular question; but, yes, I rather think I did."

"And you are not given to walking in your sleep, occasionally?"

"In my sleep? No, never." And he looked at her with a peculiar smile.

Jacinto laughed.

"Really, Jacquetta, one would think you were cross-examining him as if he were on trial for shoplifting. I shall be careful how I tell you what I dream."

Jacquetta, with her eyes fixed on Disbrowe's face, and a strange glitter in their lustrous depths, drew a long, hard breath, and said nothing. *His* eyes were fixed curiously on Jacinto—*that laugh!* surely it was not the first time he had heard it. Jacinto noticed his look, and colored slightly through his brown skin.

"Well," he said, half-annoyed, half-laughing, "is it my turn next?"

"Do you know," said Disbrowe, "I have the strangest idea that I have seen you somewhere before. But for your foreign accent, and your dark hair and complexion, I could swear you were—"

"Who?" said Jacinto, as he paused.

"You will laugh, but a lady I knew in England. You reminded me of her from the first, in some odd, unaccountable way, and your laugh—if I had not looked at you that time I could swear it was—"

"Norma!" laughed Jacquetta.

"By Jove! you've hit it! But what do you know of Norma?"

"I had a dream," said Jacquetta, with a malicious twinkle of her eye. "I dreamed Captain Disbrowe was to be married to a certain Miss Norma Macdonald when she would attain her nineteenth birthday, and that he only came to America to kill time during the tedious interval. Ahem! You see others can dream besides you, my good cousin."

Disbrowe stood fairly dumb with amazement, and his color came and went. Jacquetta's wicked eyes sparkled with triumph.

"I say!" called Frank, at this interesting juncture, thrusting out his head through the parlor door, "do you mean to come to breakfast to-day, or are we all to starve in here, while you three talk scandal out there?"

"We weren't talking scandal, Frank, dear," said Jacquetta. "Captain Disbrowe and I were merely relating two singular dreams we had last night."

"Oh! you were—were you?" growled Frank. "A pretty way that to spend the morning, and keep respectable Christians that don't believe in such heathenish things as dreams fasting in here, till they feel ravenous enough to eat a Quaker's grandmother. I'm surprised at you, Captain Disbrowe!" said Frank, thrusting his hands in his pockets, and speaking in a tone of grave rebuke, "a young person that's had your broughten up, to believe in such superstition, which corrupts the mind, debases the constitution, undermines the morals, defiles the heart—there! come to breakfast!"

"Defiles the heart—come to breakfast! A pretty brace of subjects to string together," said Jacquetta. "Come, cousin Alf, it won't do, you perceive, to keep this hungry cousin of ours waiting any longer."

She passed her arm through Jacinto's, and went in, followed by Captain Disbrowe. If ever man was "taken aback," whatever that means, the Honorable Alfred was that man, at that moment; and if ever a man was in a fair way to be madly jealous, it was he likewise. It would have been a comfort to have taken this provokingly-handsome, dark-eyed young foreigner, and pitched him neck and crop out of the front door; but even that small consolation was denied him. And in a frame of mind the reverse of seraphic, he took his place at the breakfast-table.

"Why, Jack!—I say, Jack! where's little Orrie Howlett?" inquired Frank, in surprise.

"Gone," said Jacquetta, curtly.

"Gone!" echoed the young gentleman. "Where?"

"Home—to the inn."

"Home! Go away! she couldn't go so early!"

"Has she really gone, Jack?" said Mr. De Vere, in surprise.

"Yes, sir."

"Why, when did she go?"

"Late last night—just before I retired. Old Grizzle came after her. Was that part of your dream, cousin?"

Disbrowe smiled, and bowed slightly.

"Oh, she did—did she?" said Frank. "How did Orrie like that?"

"She didn't like it at all. She would have preferred remaining until morning, and being escorted home by Captain Disbrowe, for whom she has evidently conceived a rash and inordinate attachment."

"Which I hope you return, Alfred," said Mr. De Vere, smiling.

"Certainly, sir. You don't think I could be ungallant enough to refuse so slight a favor to a young lady."

"And so you make a point of loving every girl who chooses to take a fancy to you."

"Undoubtedly!"

"Really, now! how excessively kind of you!" exclaimed Jacquetta. "And how many girls have the good taste to love you annually, Captain Disbrowe?"

"I regret I can not tell you—I never was a proficient in complex arithmetic."

"Poor little Orrie!" said Frank. "It was a shame to take her off. I wonder she went at all."

"Unfortunately she had no choice in the matter. But don't distress yourself, Francis, my son, she wasn't at all anxious about you; but was in the deepest distress at being forced away without seeing our lady-killing cousin here. In fact, we had some difficulty in persuading her to go without paying a visit to his room, to give him a parting embrace; but our combined eloquence prevailed on her at last."

"Why did you not allow her? I should have been glad to see my little friend before she left," said Captain Disbrowe.

"You were dreaming about that time," said Jacquetta, dryly. "And I rather fancy if she had entered, she would have found an empty cage. Had you not better ride over to-day and return her visit?"

"Very likely I shall—if I can prevail on you to be my body-guard on that occasion. Remember you told me once how dangerous it was for me to ride out unprotected in these savage regions."

"Poor child! so it is! Why, there is no telling but some tremendous New Jersey female might spring out from behind a tree, and unable, like all the rest of her sex, to resist the irresistible Captain Disbrowe, bear him off in his helpless innocence to— Oh! I tremble for you, cousin! Think what your anxious brother would say when he heard of it?"

"Then, to prevent such a terrific climax, will you consent to accompany and take care of me?"

"Well, there it is. I am sorry to disappoint you, but I should be a great deal more sorry to disappoint myself. Should be pleased to oblige you, cousin Alf, but you perceive I can't."

"Why not?"

"Well, I've got a previous and more pleasant engagement."

"Can you not break it? Make an act of self-denial, and come with me!"

"Oh, I couldn't think of such a thing—could I, Jacinto?"

Jacinto smiled, and was silent.

"Oh, if your engagement is with him—" began Disbrowe, coldly.

"That's it, you see; it would be impossible to break one made with him. And he has promised to teach me Spanish; and we have got already as far as the verb *to love!*"

"With such a teacher it can not have taken you long to reach that most interesting of all verbs," laughed Mr. De Vere.

Disbrowe's face had assumed a look of cold hauteur, and Jacquetta's eyes sparkled maliciously. A wicked reply was on her lips; but before she could speak, a sudden and most unexpected sound froze the words she would have uttered.

A low, soft strain of music, subdued and distant, yet perfectly clear and sweet, fell on the ears of all—that music Disbrowe so well knew.

In an instant Jacquetta was on her feet, deathly white, and with her hands clasped convulsively over her heart. Mr. De Vere, too, arose in consternation; and even Augusta, who had hitherto sat silent and stony, stood up, in evident agitation. Had a grenade suddenly exploded at their feet, it could not have produced a more instantaneous change than that low, sweet, plaintive strain. And Disbrowe saw—himself agitated, though he could scarcely tell why—that the eyes of her father and sister turned on Jacquetta, in mingled terror and pity, as if she were the one most concerned.

There was an instant's silence, and then it arose again in a long, wailing sort of cry, dying out faint and sad. Without a word, Jacquetta started to leave the room.

"Jacquetta, my dear girl, do you think had I not better accompany you?" said Mr. De Vere, turning his agitated face toward her.

"No, no—I will go myself—remain where you are," she said, in a voice so like that of last night, that her image rose again before Disbrowe, as he had seen her then standing, white and stern, like a devouring flame, in the cold moonlight.

She was gone in an instant, and Mr. De Vere and Augusta resumed their seats, still so strangely and strongly agitated, and listening intently to catch every sound. Disbrowe looked resolutely in his plate to avoid meeting the eye of Frank; and the young Spaniard looked the intense wonder he did not venture to speak.

A long and embarrassing pause ensued—broken at last by Mr. De Vere, who asked, with an apparent effort, some trivial question of Disbrowe. The young guardsman responded; and seeing the evident distress of his uncle, strove to sustain the conversation, in which he was joined, for the first time, by Augusta, who seemed roused from her petrified state by the singular sound.

It was a relief to all when the meal was over. Mr. De Vere and his daughter immediately quitted the room, Jacinto sat on a low stool, and began drawing the ears of Jacquetta's fierce dog through his fingers. Frank, with his hands in his pockets, and an uneasy look in his eyes, went whistling up and down the room; and Disbrowe stood like a tall, dark statue at one of the windows—his arms folded over his breast, and an unusual look of dark gloom on his handsome face. Jacinto and Frank cast furtive glances toward him, and at last the latter spoke:

"I say, cousin Alfred."

"Well?" was the brief response.

"What a singular affair that!—wasn't it?"

"What?"

"Oh, bother! You know well enough! The music!"

There was no response.

"Never knew it to happen before, and I've been here since I was the size of that." And Master Frank held his hand about three inches from the ground. "Very odd!—excessively so!"

"Where did it come from?" asked Jacinto.

"Oh! from around somewhere," said Frank, giving himself an uneasy shrug. "It wasn't any thing, you know!"

Jacinto smiled slightly, and returned to caressing the dog. Disbrowe turned round, and even the sight of the young Spaniard on such good terms with her favorite dog brought an irritated flush to his brow.

"I think of riding out this morning," he said, to Frank. "What do you say to coming with me?"

Frank, who had his own notions of hospitality, hesitated a moment and glanced at Jacinto. Disbrowe saw the look, and said, haughtily:

"I beg your pardon—I forgot. It will not be necessary." And he turned to leave.

"If Jacinto would come with us," said Frank, doubtfully.

"Oh! go with him. Don't mind me; I will do very well," said Jacinto, cordially.

"By no means," interposed Disbrowe, hurriedly. "Frank shall not commit such a breach of hospitality on my account. I will go alone."

Five minutes later, and he was in the saddle and away. Thinking of Jacquetta, and trying in vain to solve the riddle that perplexed him, he rode rapidly on, resolved to see little Orrie before he returned.

It was three hours nearly before the inn came in sight; and he remembered, with a strange mingling of feelings, the last night he had spent there. It was a gloomy-looking place—almost as foreboding in aspect as its mistress.

"I wonder what the dear old lady will think of this morning call from me?" soliloquized Disbrowe. "I fancy she will be surprised—rather! If anybody had told me, six months ago, when I thought it a bore to trot through Rotten Row of a sunshiny morning, that I would take, to-day, a gallop of over thirty miles, and all to see a little elf from goblin's land—well, to draw it mild, I should say it was a confounded lie! It must be something in the air, I think; or some of the dreadful energy of the natives of this new land has been, by some mysterious means, instilled into me. I wish Columbus and all his men had been scalped and devoured by the Indians the day he was so officious as to begin discovering continents, any way!"

And with this second charitable wish, he sprung from his horse, and had raised his whip to knock at the door, when a scream of delight greeted his ear; and the next instant a pair of arms were around his neck, and little Orrie herself was kissing and clinging to him like a human crab.

"Oh, I knew you'd come! I knew you would! And I'm so glad!" she exclaimed, in tones of breathless delight. "I've been waiting for you all the morning. Why didn't you come earlier?"

"Well, unless I had started in the middle of the night, I don't see how I could!"

"I came in the middle of the night—did you know it?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Miss Jack told you. I wanted to see you, but Miss Jack wouldn't let me."

"What did she say?"

"Why, that you were asleep, and it would not look well to go and awaken you. And then she said she would tell you to come and see me to-day. Were you sorry when she said I was gone?"

"Very."

Orrie lowered her voice, and pointed to the house.

"It wasn't my fault, you know; she came for me, and I didn't want to go. But then, it's just like her. She's a horrid, ugly old thing, every way you can fix it!"

"You little virago! did she make you walk?"

"Walk?" said Orrie, breaking into her short, shrill laugh. "I guess not! We rid a-horseback—on old Dobbin, you know. Are you going in?"

"No, I think not. I am not particularly anxious to see the dear old soul! I came to see you."

"Did you?—that's so nice! And, oh, I do love you better than anybody else in the world!" cried Orrie, with another of her impulsive hugs and kisses.

"Thank you. I'm very much obliged; but, at the same time, I had rather not be strangled outright with these dreadful little arms of yours. Did she beat you when she got you home?"

"No; Old Nick was here, and he wouldn't let her. Only for him, I guess I'd have caught it!" said Orrie, with a chuckle.

"Ah! is he there now?"

"No; he and Kit and Blaise went away this morning. Do you know," said Orrie, lowering her voice again, "they were talking about you when I arrived?"

"Were they? What did they say?"

"Well, you know, I couldn't hear very well—I wasn't in the room, but listening at the door."

"Oh! a very commendable practice, which you ought to cultivate while you are young, as I fancy you have a talent that way. And they were taking my name in vain, were they?"

"They were talking about you!" said Orrie, looking a little puzzled, for one-half of the young gentleman's speeches were Greek to her, or thereabouts; "and Captain Nick said he would kill you, if he was to swing for it the next moment. What did he mean by that?"

"Never mind! You will find out, probably, by experience, one of these days, if you live much longer with this amiable old lady of yours. What else did they say?"

"Why, old Grizzle laughed at him, and said she despised his notions of revenge. That killing was no good—or something like that—and that she knew a way to fix you off a thousand times worse!"

"Dear old soul!" said Disbrowe, apostrophizing her in a low voice. "What a blessed old lady she is, to be sure!"

"Then I heard old Nick ask her how; and she said to come to-morrow night—that's to-night, you know," said Orrie—"and she would tell him. And he wanted her to tell him then; and she got cross, and said she would not. And I heard her tell him another thing, too!" added the little one, suddenly—"something about Miss Jack."

"You did, eh? What was it, magpie?"

"Why, that she was going to kill two birds with one stone—you and her. So you and Miss Jack had better look out!"

"Thank you. What particular virtue is there in looking out?"

"Now, don't be funny," said Orrie, impatiently. "I should think you ought to be scared to death. I should, I know."

"Well, I am too. What else did you hear?"

"Well—nothing else," said Orrie, reluctantly. "Old Grizzle jerked the door open before I knew it, and caught me there, and boxed my ears and sent me to bed. And that's all."

"And enough too, I think. I wish you could twist yourself into some corner and hear what precious revelations they will make to-night."

"Eh?" said Orrie.

"Oh, nothing! If you hear any thing more, will you let me know?"

"Well, it's such a long piece to go to Fontelle, said Orrie, hesitatingly. "And old Grizzle does get so mad—though I don't care for that much—that—"

"Oh! I do not wish you to travel to Fontelle, my dear child," said Captain Disbrowe, smiling at her troubled little face. "Perhaps I may ride over again to-morrow and see you."

"Will you? Oh, how nice! And ain't Fontelle a beautiful place, with such lovely big rooms, and nice pictures, and carpets, and splendid soft beds? Oh! I wish I lived there!" said Orrie, with sparkling eyes.

"Upon my honor I wish you did, Firefly! Perhaps you may some day. Shall I tell you how?"

"Yes!" said Orrie, eagerly.

"Then make Frank fall in love with you, and get married to him!" laughed Disbrowe.

Orrie put her finger on her lip, perched her head on one side, bird fashion, and looked reflective.

"Do you think I could?" she said, searchingly.

"Could what?" said Disbrowe.

"Go to live there if I got married to him?" said Orrie.

Disbrowe laughed, and nodded.

"Then I will!" said Orrie, decidedly.

"Will marry him?" said Disbrowe, still laughing.

"Yes!" said Orrie, soberly; "I shall. I'll ask him about it the next time I see him. Will you live there, too?"

"No; I am afraid not. I must go home shortly."

"Where is your home?"

"Oh! away over the sea—far away."

Orrie's countenance fell.

"I shan't like it, then. I had rather go with you. Couldn't I marry you, and go there too?"

Disbrowe laughed heartily.

"What are you laughing at!" said Orrie, sharply. "I don't see any thing to laugh at! Perhaps you are laughing at me!" she exclaimed, as the thought struck her for the first time.

"Laughing at you?" said Disbrowe, composing his countenance. "I hope I have better manners. No, indeed, Miss Orrie."

"Well, will you marry me, though?" said Orrie, curiously.

"It's very likely I shall," said Disbrowe, maintaining his gravity by an effort, "though I must refer you to papa! Oh! here comes the old witch of Endor herself. Good-by, Orrie. I'll think of your proposal."

And kissing the small face, upturned in all gravity for that pleasant operation, he set her down, sprung on Saladin, and galloped off, just as old Grizzle, in angry astonishment, came to the door.

Once out of sight, Disbrowe laughed until he could laugh no longer, over Orrie's unexpected proposal, and the solemn countenance with which she made it. Once or twice more unpleasant thoughts obtruded themselves; but, with his happy, careless nature, he set them aside, and galloped back in far better spirits and appetite than when he had left.

It was sometime in the afternoon when he reached Fontelle. Wishing to see his uncle for a moment, to discover if he had any message to send to Lord Earnecliffe, to whom he was about to write, he inquired after luncheon, where he was, and learned from Tribulation that he was in the library, according to his custom "i' the afternoon."

The library was at the end of the south hall; and to reach it he had to pass the rooms of Jacquetta and Jacinto, which were opposite each other. Thinking of her with returning tenderness, he started on his errand, humming a verse of the old song:

"I might have had a king's daughter,
Far, far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter,
Had it not been for love of thee."

The door of Jacinto's room lay open as he passed, and something caught his eye, and he paused.

Well he might! Well might he stand transfixed, while the blood flushed in a crimson tide for one instant to his very temples, and then retreated, leaving him white even to his lips.

On a sofa indolently reclined Jacinto—his head resting on one hand, the other toying with the silken curls of Jacquetta, while he gazed up in her face with eyes full of love and joy. She bent above him; her arms around him as she knelt beside his couch, talking in softest whispers; and at last, as he stood there, he saw her stoop down and press her lips warmly to his.

The sight maddened him. What he would have said—what he would have done in his first fierce outburst of rage and jealousy, it would be hard to say; but both had heard him, and both were on their feet in a moment. Face, and neck, and brow of Jacquetta grew crimson for an instant—the next, it vanished; and with a look on her face he had never seen there before, she walked over and confronted him.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 87.)

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In the coming number of the SATURDAY JOURNAL, lovers of Love and Society Romance will be introduced to a story of uncommon interest and beauty, by the popular dramatic author and poet,

BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL,

VIZ.:

JULIA'S PERIL;

OR,

A Wife's Victory!

A mother and daughter, each beautiful and good, are, by a strange and mysterious fate, separated; and, drifting widely apart, become, not rivals, but leading actors in a hand and heart struggle that challenges the reader's attention to a degree of, at times, almost painful intensity.

Worried and harried by an unpropitious fortune—overshadowed by a sorrow that lies behind the outward sunshine of her nature, like an impenetrable wall, the character of the mother is a creation so distinct and grand as to lift the author at once to a seat beside George Eliot and Charles Reade.

The contrast to this strong, proud, brilliant woman is her daughter, removed from her by a barrier that seems secure, yet acting a part of duty that leads her, like a star, to the end.

The old Miller and his earnest, hopeful, resolute boy; the mad admirer; the whimsical and fond old Uncle; the lovely and loving Artist-bride; the Merchant miner of remarkable history; the mad admirer's wronged wife, and her coadjutor in revenge—all are great and felicitous characters to a great and most felicitous story, for which the readers of the SATURDAY JOURNAL will thank us over and over again.

Our Arm-Chair.

Personal.—It is with real pleasure that we announce the restoration of our friend, CAPTAIN MAYNE REID, to health and an author's activity. A letter just received from him, says:

"After a long-protracted malady of both body and mind, I am, thank Heaven, once more able to work, and will now, I trust, be able to carry out my contract with you," etc., etc.

Next to Charles Dickens, it may be safely assumed that Captain Reid is the author whom *the people* would most regret to lose. The recent announcements, therefore, of his illness and probable withdrawal from all labors with the pen, caused a widespread and heartfelt regret; but, now that we are to hear once more from him, in romance and story, is just cause for congratulation and keen expectation.

May the Captain live long to honor our literature and delight our homes!

An Inexcusable Folly.—Among the letters which drift in upon us from correspondents seeking for information or advice, are some like the following:

"I am unmistakably in love—I might say passionately, with—strange to say—three young gentlemen. My parents consent for me to accept either of them, for all are well-to-do and worthy; but. I am unable to choose, loving all with the same ardor.

"I am—sorry to say—rather timid, and two have approached me on the subject of marriage, and not wishing to displease them, I have foolishly accepted both. I am greatly worried to know what to do," etc., etc.

No *true* love can find heart enough for three lovers. The feeling is merely a passionate admiration which can be extended to a dozen admirers. If the lady has permitted herself to become engaged to two, she is not schooled in the coquette's art, and can readily give one of the gentleman unlimited leave of absence, by confessing to him that she is a coquette, or by intimating to him that she don't know her own heart. No honorable man will care to be "engaged" to a lady whose heart is not *all* his own.

This system or custom of flirting, now so generally in vogue, is an inexcusable folly. It tends to make women false and insincere, and, after a few sharp experiences, men let their natural adoration of the sex change to a feeling which should frighten all true women. The great and rapidly-growing number of unmarried young men, especially in the cities, is a direct result of this *want of faith* in woman's sincerity, and in her fitness for a wife's responsibilities. It is all deplorable enough.

Women have the remedy in their own hands. Men are, *by nature*, lovers, and if they cease to be such, in their young manhood, it is not because they are wicked and perverse, but because they lose that sweet confidence in the other sex so essential to devotion and heart-trust. A coquette is an enemy to her sex, in a subtle but effective way.

"Sporting."—"What does the Arm-Chair think of the Prize Ring?" asks a young friend, who greatly delights to read the sporting papers, and who wanted very much to witness a prize-fight. We had to answer: Prize-fighting, dog-fighting, cock-fighting, all are brutal and degrading. Only men of brutal tastes engage in them, whose fitting haunts are grog-shops and thieves' dens. To exalt exhibitions by naming them *sports*, is to degrade sport into a ruffian's delight; and the young man who becomes infatuated with such delights is simply a candidate for State's Prison. Calling fisticuffs a "manly art" is to class a crime with a virtue. If the bruiser and professional boxer are "manly," then is a ruffian a gentleman. The fact that John Morrissey went to Congress is no proof that he was a gentleman, nor that Congress was honored by his presence. On the contrary, the country at large felt that the election of a prize-fighter and professional gambler to a seat in our National Legislative halls, was a great blot upon the franchise. He represented the *worst* elements in a bad city.

No, young man; if you care for character and reputation you will give all prize-fighters a "wide berth," and for your own good, we earnestly advise you to take sporting papers in exceedingly small doses. If you have time and money at your disposal, pray be wise enough to not let them become the means of your ruin, as they certainly will be, if you consort with prize-fighters or "sports."

Cause and Cure.—"What is the annual corn crop of Kentucky?" asked a foreign tourist of a Kentuckian. "I can't exactly say," replied the Kentuckian, "but I know it's enough to make all the whisky we want, besides what is wasted for bread."

The one great source of crime in this country, is this consumption of whisky. That God's good gifts of corn should be converted into a dire curse is a sad comment on our civilization.

If the coming season of cold brings suffering, and there is a cry for bread in ten thousand homes, who is to blame? God gave us corn, enough to feed all. Where is the food? Let the distillers answer! Let the law-givers answer who gave the distiller the *right* to make his devil's broth! Let the liquor-dealer answer who deals out the infernal stuff!

Corn enough is consumed by distillers in Illinois and Kentucky, to feed one million people, each year. When our suffering poor rise up in indignation against the distiller's *crime*, then will there be peace and plenty in all the land

WHAT MAKES LIFE PLEASANT.

"This world is not so bad a place
As some would like to make it,
But whether good, or whether bad,
Depends on *how you take it.*"

WELL, yes, so it does; but it also depends on how you let others take it. We have it in our power, all of us, to brighten or embitter somebody's days besides our own, by the disposition we exhibit.

If we are bright, cheery, sunshiny and sociable, so far as we can be, everybody who approaches will feel the influence. And if we are rough and scratchy as a chestnut-burr, everybody will feel that influence, too, and not be any the happier for it.

Who has not, at some time, when themselves feeling calm and pleasant as a spring morning, come in contact with somebody who was fretful and stormy as a day in November? How quickly would our happy mood change, and we become cross, and uncomfortable, and discontented, with the power, and, most likely, the will, to set the next one *we* met by the ears.

Every day, in some family circle, our influence on the happiness or misery of others is thus illustrated. Some morning the household get up, as usual, everybody pleasant, breakfast in good order, and every thing progressing finely.

Now, let some member of the family—only a little child, maybe—begin to fret and whine over some trifle, and how quickly the spirit communicates itself to the rest. Every one gets cross, the pleasure of the family breakfast is all spoiled, and things are not only at "sixes and sevens," but at sixties and seventies.

And how easy to have avoided it all by a little good-nature—a little smoothing over rough steps, or scattering a few smiles or kind words, instead of sour looks and sharp answers.

Once, in the course of a journey, I was obliged to stop between trains at the most dismal little railroad junction that ever discouraged a weary traveler. The waiting-room was bare and blank of comfort—not even a rocking-chair to be seen, much less a sofa or lounge to rest on—the sole article approaching to luxury being a wretched, ricketty old piano, standing open in one corner.

Well, there were a good many travelers in the room, and everybody looked cross and tired. The children fretted, and the prospect of having to stay there for four or five hours was not pleasant at all.

After a while, a fair-faced young lady came into the room, and, for want of a better place, laid her shawl and satchel on the old piano. Then she gave the piano an interested, half-wistful glance, and sat down.

Close by sat an elderly and observing lady, who spoke to this young lady, and said:

"You look at the piano as if you recognized an acquaintance. Do you play?"

"Sometimes I do," replied the young girl, pleasantly.

"Well, I think a little music would enliven us dull travelers. Won't you be kind enough to play for us?" said the elderly lady.

The young girl obligingly complied, and sat down to the old piano, and played and sung a good many pieces. Without great skill, she played very well, and had a fresh, young voice, and her music was like magic.

The old piano was horribly out of tune, but it was so much pleasanter than we expected, to have any music at all, that nobody minded that. People began to smile and look pleasant as they listened, the children grew quiet, and some of them went to sleep.

And, first thing we knew, the dull afternoon had slipped away, and the train was coming.

Several people thanked the young lady for her pleasant entertainment, and the elderly lady smilingly remarked:

"Ah, yes, that is one of the ways we have of doing good, and making life pleasant as we go along."

Well, it was only a trifle; yet, through the kindness of two cheerful, sociable people, we, who had never met before, and never were likely to meet again—who did not even know each other's names—spent a most enjoyable afternoon, where we expected a miserable one. And the impression left was so agreeable that, years after, one of the number remembers, and thus alludes to the hours passed at that old junction.

It is the trifles of daily life and everyday intercourse which make up the grand whole, and if we take care of these trifles—if we not only try to take the world good-naturedly ourselves, but help others to do so, too—we may do an immense amount of unknown good as we pass along—lighten many a weary hour and heavy heart, and help largely to make life pleasant.

MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

TALKING IN THE CARS.

I AM unfavorably inclined to persons making their home and domestic affairs public, as if everybody were as much concerned about their "folks" as themselves.

Take your seat in a railway station, waiting for the cars; people will come in, and bring a parcel of relatives, "gals and fellers," to see them off. They'll laugh and carry on in a manner calculated to displease persons who respect propriety. Then will come a wholesale talk of their doing "to home," loud enough to be heard all over the car. What do I care if "Beniah Gushrock did more work in one day than any of his grandsons?" Is it interesting to me to learn that "Sairey Beemis had a felon on her finger, and the doctor *did* think she'd have to have the bone scraped, but she didn't?" Will not the country rest in peace if "Josiah Beebe vowed he wouldn't have nothin' tew dew with the noospapers what went agin' his principles?"

Is there any necessity to shout out all about the kissing party that occurred the night previous, and how Angelica Topps blackened Sam Jones' face with a piece of burned cork, when he strived to kiss her?

Do, for Mercy's sake, my good friends, have a little more respect for your neighbor's feelings, if you haven't any for your own.

Getting into the cars, I imagined I should escape their senseless jargon, but the fates willed it otherwise, for the chattering continued.

There was the newly-married couple behind me, giggling and asking each other the most nonsensical questions, that had not the slightest interest for me. A couple of fellows, a few seats off, were discussing the merits of two prize-fighters, and they made use of the most unintelligible expressions I ever heard, and I wondered out of which dictionary they got their language. For more than a mile was I condemned to hear their talk of the prize-ring, and I was only too thankful when they had reached their destination, and left the cars.

Then, there was an old gentleman, who was always complaining if the car door was left open, or there was too little wood in the stove, and in the next breath would remark that he "didn't wish to be roasted alive." His poor wife—I pitied her—would try to keep him still with—"John, you ought to remember that there are other people's wants that need attending to besides your own."

"Madam," was his answer, "I've as good a right to express my opinion as anybody."

Not a far-off neighbor was of a very vinegary aspect, and whose nose had an inclination skyward, as the newsboy asked her to buy a book. Of course she refused; and thereafter we were treated to a wholesale stock of invectives against books and bookmakers, until I was so fairly disgusted that I almost envied the gentlemen who could seek relief from her chattering, in the smoking-car.

How many mothers I have heard prating about the remarkable brightness of their young ones, and how everybody said "there never was so much smartness seen as in *their* offspring?" If they *must* talk of such things, don't let them do it in the cars.

How can a person take pleasure in traveling, when it is so marred by this loud talking, and blazoning forth affairs in which we take no interest? I love to be quiet when I go traveling. I can enjoy the scenery better, and have more congenial thoughts. As it is now, I get the book-hater mixed up in a prize-fight, with the two young fellows I have mentioned. Then the complaining old gentleman is about to kiss the premium child's mother who is afflicted with a felon, but it seems to interfere with Josiah Beebe's "principles," and he calls for more firewood, until the Tower of Babel appears to me to be far preferable to the publication of other people's affairs in the steam cars.

EVE LAWLESS.

WATER VS. WHISKY

THE fact that Cincinnatti has lately had a sensation in the shape of a cold water drinking fountain, known as the "Tyler Davidson Fountain," an item that met our eye in one of our American papers lately, suggested some stray thoughts on temperance.

I thought that, if we had a Tyler Davidson Fountain standing in the place where every tavern and public house stands, how eagerly the thirsty would avail themselves of the boon. I can picture, instead of bloated faces and ruby noses, the ruddy looks of the artisans, as they drink the refreshing draught, and the firm, quick step of the clear-headed clerk, instead of the unsteady walk of the intemperate employee.

I wish that, like the first-born sons of the Egyptian parents, the thousand taverns in our land might be destroyed in one night. I wish that the laws were even more rigorous in their application to drink, taverns, bar-keepers, and drunkards. If a chemist blindly sells poison to any person that calls for it, he is liable at law. Yet there are those who sell poison day after day to the same reckless beings, who do so with impunity, though they are the means of destroying more souls annually than we can think of without a shudder of pity.

The drunkard, like the suicide, wilfully takes his own life, only more slowly and more deliberately, by drinking liquors, which deprive the organs of the body of their power to support the action which is needed to sustain full life, till some sickness attacks the poor, weakened frame, and the frail cord of life is prematurely snapped.

We wax warm on such a subject, because we think it one that befits the enlistment of our warmest sympathies. We would have those bottles which, in common parlance, are said to contain rum, whisky, brandy, and wine, labeled severally—"Poison!" Drinking fountains, and more of them, is our wish; and is not the wish itself a blow struck at taverns and intemperance?

More water, and less whisky! More of God's pure drink, and none of man's poison, is the drunkard's need, and society's as well.

But more anon! PENMAN SWIFT.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

"WHY is conversation dying out?" It is in a great measure owing to want of culture and thought in those who make up general society, a lack of interest in subjects adapted to general conversation. In *tete-a-tete*, chit-chat and personalities are admirable; but in conversation, to use a slang phrase, we must "talk like a book," or must possess a gift in talking that kind of nonsense which Talleyrand found so delightful and refreshing, and in which the French excel, or else know something of the world through our own travels or those of other people, or politics, metaphysics and philosophy. Conversation is an art, Emerson says, in which a man has all mankind for competitors. Does he not fail to draw the line here between those who talk and those who converse? The world is full of the former but has few of the latter. It seems to take so many intellectual qualities to make a good conversationalist. It is not enough to have the power of expression; many bright spirits have been witty with the pen who have utterly failed with the tongue.

Foolscap Papers.

The Society of Natural History.

THE Shadopolis Society of Natural History held their regular monthly meeting in their new hall last night. This society has become one of the institutions of our land. Its members are justly noted for their intelligence and long-sightedness; and their investigations, in their line, have commanded the admiration of the old world, of whose learned institutions several have conferred degrees of honor upon these professional gentlemen.

The members were all present last night, besides a score of distinguished invited guests, including the undersigned.

The minutes of the last meeting were read in a few seconds, and adopted.

Prof. Bog rose and begged to present for the consideration of the learned savans an animal, which, he said, had never before been seen in these parts. It was somewhat in the shape of a dog, but it had no hair, being smooth-skinned. The members examined the animal through their spectacles, and over them, and under them. Prof. Brown Smith would say to the honorable body that he, for his part, was stumped. The president said that Africa possesses many unknown and unnamed animals, and that he thought this one was originally from there. They found that it barked somewhat like a canine, and wasn't averse to fresh meat.

Stokes said he should think it belonged to the extremely rare order of *Ichnxpovqkbdmxtsogenarian*, but wouldn't be sure. The balance of the learned members, except Prof. Spinks, thought the same, as they couldn't think of any thing else, and voted that a correct drawing of this animal be made and filed. Spinks suggested the horrible idea that some one was imposing on the society with a shaved dog. He was immediately voted out of the society.

Prof. Snooks, a man with a massive brain, if it is in proportion to his stomach, arose and begged to read a communication addressed to the learned body, the writer having been an eye and ear-witness to a fight between two dogs, during which each dog ate the other up, till there was nothing left of either but the skulls, and that each skull then grabbed the other skull in its jaws and ran off in opposite directions. The president, after an absorbed deliberation, during which he spat in Prof. Stokes' hat, near his chair, said the affair was very strange, but that we must not doubt it, as we are called upon to believe many things which are startling and inexplicable. He ordered the secretary to make a note of it.

Prof. Jinks presented before the society a roll of butter, which he had just bought, and which contained a large stone. Some averred that the stone had been fraudulently placed there. Prof. Cobb began a learned dissertation upon the phenomenon. The stone might have been swallowed by the cow in the first place, he said; or the butter might have been kept in a stone jar, and that the butter might have completely absorbed the jar, as he has frequently known it to do (the butter was purchased at his grocery), or that the butter had petrified from the center, as is often the case. As they couldn't agree on it, it was referred to the geologists.

A cat with no tail next occupied the curiosity of the body. Prof. Bog had never heard of such a thing; couldn't see how it could be. Smith looked at the cat with his spectacles opened to their widest, and said he had never seen the like. Jones had never beheld such a thing. Robinson had never viewed it before. Jinks wanted to know what was the object of a cat being born without a tail. It was unanimously decided to place this freak of nature in the society's collection. Bangs suggested that some one might have cut the tail off. He was fined for contempt.

Sod, a rural member, presented a snake which he had found in his boot one morning. Bangs asked him if he hadn't several in his boots the night before. Stokes said if Bangs alluded to the mythological snakes, he would say it was not of that species, as he had examined them; the balance of the learned body fully concurred in Prof. Stokes' assertion, as they all had examined them, themselves. The snake was finally laid on the table.

The monkey question was then discussed, during which Bangs turned to Jinks, who sat by him, and said: "How would you like to be a monkey?" Jinks said: "I am very near one now." As Bangs didn't see the point, it was passed over.

The president said if his memory was a little stronger, he could remember when this learned body was traveling around with a menagerie. The discussion was dropped.

A lifeless owl, which had been sent to the society, was then examined; but when it was opened for dissection, it was found to be full of straw. This was a stunner. Prof. Bog said he never knew owls ate straw before; Stokes thought this one had made a pretty square meal, if he did eat straw; Cobb brought his theory to bear, and said it had probably gone to sleep in a mow, and had absorbed the whole stack. There was a good deal of learned stumbling over those straws.

The remains of a defunct and unknown animal were brought in. It had been discovered in tearing down an old building. After due deliberation, it was pronounced to be a *wim-wam*—a defunct species. The visitors said it was an old fur cap.

Cobb related how he had been chased by a wild beast in the woods, the day before. It was a ferocious animal. It said, "He, haw! he, haw!" Stokes asked him what kind of ears it had. Cobb said they were just about as long as the president's, if his were cut off two inches. Every one knew what the animal was.

The president dismissed the meeting by a little speech, in which he said it was the duty of each member to try and procure objects of interest in natural history for these meetings, even if they had to search with a fine tooth comb, and though the field of their operations should be their own heads.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—Book MS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book Ms., and be sealed in wrappers with open end, in order to pass the mails at "Book rates."—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy;" third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its folio or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

The following MSS. are declined, for various reasons, and those with which stamps were inclosed are returned: "The Detected Traitor;" "Why Pandy Ellis," etc.; "At the Stake;" "A Sketch of the Sea;" "The Same Old Story;" "Poem by T. F. H.;" "First Hunt on Red River;" "Closing Year;" "Home-sick Sailor;" "Aunt Bessie's Visit;" "Consequences" and poem by C. R. T.; "How Santa Claus," etc.; "Nil Desperandum;" "The Power of Patience."

The three MSS. by E. G. L. are returned—the price fixed upon them being much above their value.

The poems by Miss A. R. we do not care to use. While excellent in sentiment, they are too defective in rhythm and construction. If Miss A. will *study*, she may hope for success.

Will find place for "What Makes Life Pleasant;" "The Cottage on the Hill;" "Hurry-scurry;" "Plain Words;" "Consistency;" "Never Fear;" "A Common Failing;" "Good Clothes;" "Why So?" "Worriments."

Will hold for further consideration, the serial by A. S. G. A serial to pass with us must be *very* good. The poems by the same author are put on the accepted list.

W. A. S. Have not received the poem "Druidism."

WM. M., San Francisco, Cal. The right to dramatize a copyrighted story must be obtained of the owner of the copyright.

MAUD. The expression referred to, viz.: "When Greek meets Greek, *then* comes the tug of war" is now used to imply that, when two well-matched opponents meet, the contest will be especially severe.

We return the MS. remitted by C. R. T., Providence, as not available. Nine cents postage marked "due" on the same.

CLARA S. C. The advertisements referred to in the Boston weekly, for "correspondents," are simply snares for the unwary. *Never* answer them.

ARTHUR SMITH. Sick headache is generally, caused by indigestion, and may be relieved by drinking very freely of warm water, whether it produces vomiting or not. If the feet are cold, warm them or bathe them in water as hot as you can bear it. Soda or ashes in the water will do good. If the pain is very severe apply a cloth wrung out of hot water to the head; pack the head as it were. To prevent it, let plainness, simplicity and temperance preside at your table. In some cases medicine is necessary, but if the above is properly carried out, almost immediate relief will be experienced.

H. E. R "Love Blind" ended in No. 77. Miss Louise Alcott can be addressed through her publishers, James R. Osgood & Co., Boston. Our new volume commences with the issue of March 4th, 1872.

W. T. V. Have answered by mail your inquiries in regard to "Dialogues." The new issue, now in press (Beadle's Dime Dialogues. No. 11, is full of good things for schools and exhibitions.

CHICAGO SUFFERER. Any newsdealer will fill your order for our paper—of which back numbers can always be had of the Western News Company of your city.

GEO. B. S. Your better course, if you are determined to become an actor, is to obtain a position in some theater at home. Do not think of coming on to New York for such employ, because there are ten boys here for every vacancy that exists.

L. A. Y. The MS., "The Ocean," is returned by mail, but the direction is inexplicit.

H. F. C. asks us what we know about the two professed cancer cures—the Condurango weed and the Clover Tea treatment. The first-named, we believe, is pronounced a cruel and most wicked humbug. The clover tea treatment is represented as having accomplished almost miraculous cures. The red clover blossom is used. Boil the blossom and drink the tea, at the same time bathing the cancer thoroughly with the infusion.

GEORGE HENRY. The entire number of Indians in the United States and Territories (not including Alaska) is about 288,000. The number of tribes or nations is 142. At the rate of decrease which has followed the tribes for the last fifty years, fifty years more will see the red-man only in small remnants of what are now powerful nations. The fiat seems to have gone forth—the red-man must perish from off the face of the earth. No civilization or care for the red race seems able to avert their impending doom. They will not "civilize."

C. W K. of Washington, will find her answer in "Our Arm-Chair."

MARY. We are sorry to say that dresses *disgustingly low* in the neck are fashionable this season. Women wear dresses which cause them to look as if they were endeavoring *to crawl* out of them through the top, and, if "appearances are not deceitful," they look as if they would *succeed*. Will not fathers, husbands and brothers cry down this great shame and indecent exposure?

HENRY DATER. The Grand Duke Alexis is the third son of the Emperor of Russia, and is now in his twenty-second year.

MARY HARKINS. The ladies will, doubtless have another chance, before very long, to "dress for royalty," as the Emperor of Brazil will pass through New York, upon his return from Europe, where he is now traveling. The Emperor, however, unlike the Duke, is married—so is not "a catch."

HENDRICKS. Large droves of wild horses are yet found in Texas. They are caught with the "lasso."

MORGAN W. The dinner-hour in the United States varies from 12 o'clock until 7 o'clock, P. M. No country has an appointed national hour for dining, and in America the time for partaking of the "mid-day meal," as dinner was wont to be called, varies more than in any other land.

GEORGIE. It is very foolish for you to spend three months' income merely to attend a ball. "Willful waste makes woeful want," as you may discover, one of these days, if you continue in such a style of extravagance.

HORACE WATERS. "Letters of Marque" are vessels commissioned by a government, in time of war, to prey upon the mercantile navy of its antagonist. Privateers come under this head. They are owned by private parties, and only have a government commission to shield them from a plea of piracy.

GOVERNESS. No married women are allowed in the public schools of New York city. This is just, for it aids young ladies to a support, while those who are married can depend upon their husbands.

MARIA. Long overskirts are most fashionable. Dress of dark green serge trims prettily with either black velvet ribbon, or green a shade lighter than the dress.

CARRIE S. Pompadour style is now very fashionable for dressing the hair.

JOHN CARSON. The young lady is not worthy of you, if she accepts invitations from other gentlemen, after being engaged to marry you.

MABEL K. Do not consent to a clandestine marriage. Better wait until you are of legal age, and then, if your parents do not give their consent, and you feel confident of the young man's ability to support you, and you know he is not given to any bad habits, our advice is, marry him.

KATE R. When a lady and gentleman are but slightly acquainted, it is proper for the lady to bow first.

C. W. H. Horace Greeley was born in Amherst, New Hampshire, Feb. 3, 1811, and is, therefore, in his sixty-second year.

GEORGIE WEBSTER. The following are, no doubt, the lines to which you refer, and are from a poem entitled "Musings," written by the late Mrs. Amelia B. Welby:

"For every wave with dimpled face
That leaped upon the air,
Had caught a star in its embrace,
And held it, trembling, there."

SAMUEL WYNN. There is no fixed rule regarding the hours one must sleep. Some constitutions require a great deal of sleep, others not half so much. We think, however, that seven or eight hours is best for one's health. Perhaps the most concise rule for limiting hours of sleep may be found in the following:

"Nature requires five,
Custom gives seven,
Laziness takes nine,
And wickedness eleven."

☞ *Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.*

WEDDING WISHES.

BY MALCOLM TAYLOR, JR.

The visiting days are over,
The wooing days are past,
He who was late a lover,
A husband is at last!

Well, even thus 'tis written,
For man was woman made;
If her charms have him smitten,
What blame on him be laid?

None can; then may he never
Have reason to regret
The very day that ever
A helpmate he did get.

But, may each of them prove
A blessing to the other,
And live a life of love
Only for one another.

May Fortune, smiling on them,
Shower her bright blessings down
In golden rain upon them,
Nor ever on them frown.

May Pleasure strew their way
With flowers of happiness,
Nor Grief's weeds thorny may
Their steady steps oppress.

May both live to be old,
Enjoying wealth and peace,
And may, in time, tenfold
Multiply and increase!

Then when the ling'ring sand
In Life's hour-glass has run,
May each have in Love's land
A seat of honor won.

A Just Retribution.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

A LOW, sandy stretch of sea-shore, where the waves lapped up in murmurous, plashing melody, a clear, light-blue sky, in whose center hung a round, full moon, that reflected a trembling line of silver radiance on the water.

A quiet, pensive hour, a solemnly-grand place, and, standing on the very ocean's face, two persons, who little knew the destiny their Fates were weaving for them both on that cool August night.

She was wondrous fair, as she stood in motionless, careless grace, with a glowing scarlet crepe shawl draped over her partially bare head, so golden in its burnished brightness, and falling in rich, heavy folds over her white ruffled dress, that looked like a gossamer web in the ethereal moonlight.

A dainty, high-bred girl, born to the elegancies and refinements of aristocratic society; and a haughty-lipped, high-blooded girl, as cold as an iceberg when she chose; as passionate as an Italian beneath her cool, calm exterior.

A very beautiful, worshipful girl was Blanche Truxton; and the man who stood awkwardly off from her, in almost startling attitude, with his deep, searching gray eyes reading her immobile face, worshiped her to distraction.

He wasn't anybody—this tall, ungainly fellow, who had met Blanche by accident as she wandered alone on the shore, so thankful to have stolen unobserved from the heat, and light, and crowd of the hotel.

He wasn't *considered* anybody, because he was ugly, and ungraceful and poor; and yet, from all the women in this wide, wide world, Philip Duval had chosen Blanche Truxton, the unapproachable, to shower all his love upon.

They had been casually introduced the very day Blanche came: that night Philip Duval walked his bedroom till morning, trying to convince himself he was a fool, that her bright, cold eyes had pierced him through and through.

But the long-slumbering fires in his heart—he was twenty-eight then, and never had loved before—were not to be quietly extinguished; and all that brief, ecstatic summer, he had drifted on and on, on the tide of fate. To-night it seemed as though the finger of Destiny had led them both; and now, there they stood, just where they had met, and just where Philip Duval had almost commanded Miss Truxton to pause, for she would have passed him, with only the queenly, half-gracious bow he knew so well.

But he had almost involuntarily put out his arm to arrest her progress, and then she had drawn back a pace, in surprise, at his presumption, wondering what he was going to do.

And, in truth, he was going to do the most unprecedented thing; he, penniless, compared with the wealth of Blanche Truxton, nameless, in so far as wealth went, with his awkward manner, plain, beardless face, was going to ask Blanche to marry him—her, who had never given more thought to him than to the colored boy who rode after her in her phaeton.

It *was* passing strange, and while Philip Duval could not account for the wild, fond yearning he had for this dainty, frail girl, it seemed that some inevitable power was urging him on to meet the fate in store for him. Not that he certainly *knew* she would refuse him; no man can believe that, or he never would offer his love to woman; and yet, when Philip Duval had told her, in very manly, well-selected words, that he loved her, and wanted her, he could not positively say he was terribly disappointed when she suddenly and sharply turned her face toward him, astonishment written on every beautiful, classic feature.

Had it been *only* amazement he read there, as their eyes met, Philip Duval would have borne it, for he was a strong-hearted man; but when he noticed the contemptuous scorn that flashed from her cold, brilliant eyes, and the smile that played on her proud lips, he was wounded to his very soul—cut to the quick, that she scorned the allegiance of an honest man. Then when the answer came, Philip Duval could have crushed her to the ground, so mercilessly did she reject him.

"Mr. Duval! I will be charitable enough to suppose you have forgotten yourself! Will you be so kind as to permit me to pass?"

She drew her scarlet shawl around her as though the touch of his gray coat-sleeve were contamination, and then walked on toward the twinkling lights of the hotel windows.

He did not attempt to address her; he stood, just as she saw him, for a half hour later, with a grim, hard smile settling slowly around his compressed lips; a merciless, icy sneer gradually dawning in his clear, keen eyes.

Then he sauntered slowly along; but the die was cast; and Philip Duval rejoiced in his heart that there were, in all human probability, long years yet ahead of both him and Blanche Truxton.

The bright moonlight was streaming in across the pink velvet carpet of a spacious dressing room; the white lace curtains had been looped carelessly away over the gold brackets, and in a broad, cold banner of white, Blanche Truxton was sitting, listlessly looking out upon the leafless flower gardens and snow-piled paths.

Six years had not made much difference in her looks or manner. She was as coldly beautiful, crouching there in the moonlight, with a dark dress lying in thick, soft fullness around her, as she had been one August night, in her white drapery, when she had, all unknown to herself, taken her destiny in her hands—and blasted herself.

She never had once thought of Philip Duval all those six years. All those years she had been sought after and courted by men of rank, riches and name; and yet, after it all, Blanche Truxton, sitting all alone, with the moonlight shining over her, knew she never had known what love was till then.

At last her proud, cold heart had succumbed, and with all the passion that lay hidden under a marble exterior, she worshiped Lynn St. Philip.

Lynn St. Philip! Her heart beat quicker as her lips moved to form unspoken the name, and a vivid memory of his elegance, his grace, his *distingue* air, his refinement, brought proud, sweet flushes to her pure face.

They had met early in the winter, and Blanche could not remember when she had not idealized and idolized this perfect hero of hers.

She was not alone, either, in this hero-worship, for many a proud-headed woman who had come under the light of Lynn St. Philip's eyes had been willing to whisper "yes" to their owner if he once had bent over them and asked if they loved him, with that tenderly-haughty way he had with women.

He had stirred Blanche Truxton's heart to its uttermost depths; till she, herself, wondered at her own capability of loving.

It brought no peace to her, however—this knowledge that she was so wholly his—because Lynn St. Philip never had intimated to her that she was aught to him, more than the scores of pretty women he knew.

He was not a flirt, either; there was something superior about him, too grand, too noble, to allow him to make a plaything of women's affection. It was this very charm of his, this half-stern, half-familiar way he had, that had won for him Blanche Truxton's love.

He was a remarkably fine-looking man, with heavy beard that was of richest brown in shade, dark, piercing eyes, that had more or less of smiling sarcasm in them.

And for this man Blanche Truxton was—almost dying for love.

"You are radiant to-night. Did you know it?"

A fair hand was laid on Blanche Truxton's shoulder, and admiring eyes critically scanned the perfect toilette of light green silk and billows of costly Vandyke point.

Above the pearl necklace, Blanche's fair, pure face shone strangely calm and radiant. I say "strangely" and "radiant," because the flush of excitement on her marble features was never before seen there, and it lent an almost startling glory to her face.

"Yes," she returned, very quietly, to her friend, as she held out a perfectly-modeled wrist, around which she desired her bracelet clasped. "Yes, Hattie, I know I never looked so well in all my life before. I *am* beautiful, am I not?"

Hattie Denton's eyes opened a little wider at Blanche's words, for Blanche was not given to receiving compliments, much less manufacturing her own flattery. Now, she saw the unnatural excitement glittering in those royal eyes, the delicious carmine fire on either cheek, and wondered what it meant.

"You are exquisitely beautiful, Blanche, and I half imagine you have some 'great, grand, glorious' object in view for this reception at Mrs. Warner's. Am I right?"

She laughed, as she snapped the catch of the pearl and golden wristlet.

"I *have* an object, Hattie. I am going to take my fate in my hands to-night."

There was almost solemnity in her eager, half-suppressed words, but she little knew that, instead of "taking it in her own hands," she was about to banish it from her altogether.

The low, murmurous sound of music was delightfully distant from that enchanted spot where they stood—those two, Lynn St. Philip and Blanche Truxton—amid a twilighted fragrance and a sweet silence, hightened rather than disturbed by the tinkling of a fountain over vine-wreathed rocks.

They had wandered hither to their hostess' conservatory, just after the Lanciers, and, as they stood under the faint, mellow rays of the light that came, filtered, through thick grained glass, Lynn St. Philip thought the fair woman on his arm was very like the Undine he had imagined.

Perhaps he had been telling her some such flattery as that, for she trembled as she leaned, almost heavily, on his arm.

She was wondering if he would utterly despise her for what she must say, *must* say, because the love in her heart was consuming her, and she *would* speak, unwomanly though her finer nature told her she would be; speak and know if there was any hope for *her—her*, Blanche Truxton, to whom scores had sued in vain.

She forgot all her hard refusals; she refused to remember how often she had crushed brightest, fairest hopes. All she remembered was that her earthly happiness lay in Lynn St. Philip's hands.

And he was thinking of other days, when he had poured out his heart at one woman's feet, and she had—

Then Blanche's siren voice, laden with low, intoxicating music, dispelled the frown that had, perhaps unconsciously, been darkening on his brow.

"Mr. St. Philip, will you let me tell you a secret, and promise not to hate me, for—"

Perhaps it was accidental, but, just then, Mr. St. Philip stooped and broke off a valuable white lily.

"I crave a thousand pardons, Miss Truxton. I was extremely awkward. What were you about to say?"

His eyes had fairly scintillated when he first raised his face from examining the broken blossom; now, as he bended over Blanche's hot face, there was *such* a strange, fascinating splendor in them; and Blanche, fated Blanche! the words came rushing to her eager lips, regardless of the urging inward soul that would have detained them.

"I know I ought not—I fear you can not but hate and scorn me—but, oh! how can you know the unutterable tenderness in my heart? Oh! Mr. St. Philip—*Lynn! Lynn!* if you will only let me love you!"

She snatched her hand from his arm and confronted him, laying her clenched fingers on his hand, and meeting, fully, his dark, stern eyes.

Low as she had spoken, her own voice had frightened her; respectfully as he had listened, there was a dawning something in his face, his eyes, his air, that frightened her more.

Then, in a second, he answered, and his voice was as clear and calm as a summer sky.

"Once, by the moonlighted sea, on a clear, breezy night, a woman, fair as a lily, spurned a lover with these words: 'I will be charitable enough to suppose you have forgotten yourself.' Miss Truxton, with the insulting words with which you scorned the honest love of Philip Duval, six years ago last August, to-night Philip Duval scorns you!"

She staggered back several steps, a white agony dawning slowly over her face.

"I did not know that—that—"

"The grub could transform to the butterfly with the help of a slight change of name, and several other trifling alterations."

He finished her sentence in a cold, distant voice, and then offered his arm.

"We will return to the dancing-room, Miss Truxton."

Quite a number of people marveled that Blanche Truxton persisted in putting on deepest mourning when a fourth cousin died, and thus debarring herself from all kinds of society pleasure. And people never dreamed of attributing the "whim" to its right cause.

The Flaming Talisman:

OR,

THE UNFULFILLED VOW.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE POISONED CHALICE.

"Now wield me
Thine instrument o: havoc and of horror,
Thine to the extremest limits of revenge."
—MILMAN.

THE large house of Mervin Darnley was rapt in silence.

Even at that early hour, before the many stores had ceased to flash and flare their brilliant lights upon the streets, there reigned an awing stillness in and around the old-time mansion, as if the very air that moved in its proximity were murmuring strangely of what was to come.

The numerous servants of the household, free from the duties of their several posts for the day, had—some of them—returned to their homes, and others were holding low converse in the kitchen—subject: young Mr. Darnley.

Through the "up-stairs" domestics, news of Reginald's dismissal was conveyed to brother and sister servants; and now, when relieved of work, they grouped together, near the open basement window, to discuss the affair and float opinions.

"It's a real shame!" exclaimed one of the females, whose prejudices were strongly against the action of Mervin Darnley.

"I don't believe he deserved it at all!" indorsed one of her companions, who, by the toss of her head and emphatic expression, betrayed how much Reginald was in her esteem.

"That's a fac', girls," said Jerry, the gardener, thoughtfully. "Master Rex allus treated me like he ought, an' no gentleman c'u'd do better. But, then, ye see, p'r'aps there's somethin' ahind it, after all; an' mebbe Mr. Mervin Darnley knows a-better what he's doin' than we think on—"

"But, 'tain't right; and I won't believe he done right in sendin' Mr. Reginald away!" interrupted one of his listeners.

"It's mighty queer to me," continued Jerry, half-musing, as he puffed vigorously at his short clay pipe and looked soberly down at the floor; "there seems to 'a' been a little somethin' wrong in the house of Darnleys ever since—since—"

"Since what, Jerry?" inquired both the females, interestedly.

"Well, 'e see," removing the pipe from his mouth, and watching the smoke as it ascended from the bowl, "it's been a long, long time ago; but I was a-with them when they first married—"

"Mr. Mervin Darnley and his wife?" They were listening eagerly to the gardener's words.

"*Of* course. I say I was along 'ith them from the first, an' I knew they wasn't made for each other; but then *I* didn't say nothin'. I on'y c'u'd keep me mouth shut an' me eyes open—an', girls, it's been many the hard word Jerry Doan heard betwixt them."

"O—h!"

"Ye see—now, mind, she was an elegant Creole, as they call 'em, an' when Reginald's father marri'd 'er, she was just one of the lovingest creeturs ever winked at the stars in the blue sky. But, then, it didn't last—it didn't last."

"Go on, Jerry; go on."

Jerry Doan appeared to be thinking while he recovered the fire in his pipe, and, presently, he resumed:

"Well, as I said, it's many the hard word came from the two of them, an' it's many the row they had. Missus' temper was like the boil of a volcany, an', mind now, human natur' couldn't put up 'ith it. I tell ye, girls, she was a devil on the face of the earth! an' I seen her big eyes, a-sometimes, when they lookt like the sputter uv a pinwheel. So master he wouldn't live no longer this way, an' he told her to clear out."

"Told her to go away, Jerry?"

"That's it; he told her to clear out from him. But then, the divil knows why she wouldn't go—" Jerry frowned and hesitated.

"Well, Jerry—well?"

"She wouldn't go out of the house at *all*."

"And what then?"

"Gad! he *put* 'er out. But, then, do ye think that was the last? Shrivel a bit! She hung around for a month or more, an' pestered him till 'is hair was gray with seein' of her. He went for a divorce—but, the imp! she went, too; an' the judge, he said, as they seemed of the same mind in that, they c'u'd be of the same mind in other things, an' *therefore* might as well stay man an' wife. So blank's the divorce he got. An' that's the reason he's never marri'd again; for 'e don't know if his wife's a-livin' or not."

"But, what else, Jerry? What became of her?"

"Hold on a bit—there's the bell a-jumpin'."

A summons at the door-bell broke in upon their conversation, and one of the girls started to answer it.

"Does Mervin Darnley live here?" inquired a policeman, who stood on the steps.

"He does, sure."

"Is he in?"

"He is, sure."

"Will you give him this, then? Be sure he gets it *at once*. It is a matter of life and death." And, with this admonition, he departed.

It was a small piece of paper with penciling on it, and as the girl passed the entry light, on her way up-stairs, she turned it over and over in her hand, as if impelled by curiosity to strive to decipher the words.

When she had delivered the missive to Mervin Darnley, in his library, she returned to her companions in the kitchen.

Jerry at once took up the thread of his mysterious recital.

"Now, 'e see, as I said, this woman—meanin' the Creole—was of the devil's own humor sometimes, an' it's a bit of a wonder to me that she didn't do her husband some harm, at night, while he slept, for, I tell ye, girls, she did hate him, if ever a woman knew how to hate—"

"But, you said he'd got rid of her?"

"Well, an' it would seem he did, at last; but, mind, afore she went away for the last time, she met 'im on the street one day—I was with 'im, carryin' of a lot of shrubs—an' the way them eyes of hers fired up, an' the way them lips of hers spit at 'im—well, it made old Jerry's heart kick some, now, I tell you."

"What was it? What did she say?"

"Now, I don't remember exactly—that she'd be even 'ith him, an' the like. Yes, an' I heard her say, 'at the day would come when every one who bore the name of Darnley, or knew a favor at the hands of a Darnley, should die—die an onnatural death!"

"O—h!"

"Yes, she was fierce enough. But then, that ain't nothin' to do with this affair, now, I guess. Girls"—a new idea seemed working in the aged head of Jerry Doan—"ye know that snaky chap what's been playin' valet to Mr. Reginald?"

"Yes!" they answered quickly.

"Now, then, did ye's ever remark how much he looked like Mr. Reginald?"

"Yes, I have?" they exclaimed, in chorus.

"An' so have I. They look amazin' alike; enough to be brothers. It's me own wits I've puzzled a bit, thinkin' on it, and—"

"*Dong!*" A small gong-bell at one side of the room interrupted him.

"There's Mr. Darnley's bell. Get me the ale, Sary, an' I'll take it up to 'im, an' then I'll go to bed—" As he finished his speech, his mouth opened, and he gazed vacantly at the window, as if amazed by some sudden apparition.

"What on airth 's the matter, Jerry?" hurriedly inquired one of the girls, marking the half-wild stare of his eyes.

"Sary—" breathlessly.

"What is it?"

"Did you see 'im?"

"Him? Who?"

"Mr. Reginald."

"Mr. Reginald! No. Where?"

"At the windy.

"You're dreamin'."

"*Divil* a bit! I saw 'im, Sary."

"Maybe something 's happened to him," stammered the second female, with a shudder; "and it's our talkin' of him that's brought his ghost to look at us."

A simultaneous shiver crept over them.

For several moments they waited, watched, listened. Not a sound or sight.

"Get the ale, Sary," said Jerry, at length.

The gardener's face was, naturally, very sober in expression, and it was twice so now. He felt sure that he had seen Reginald Darnley at the window, which opened toward the garden, and, not being entirely free from the influence of superstition, the occurrence caused him much perplexity of mind.

When the maid had procured the ale—which it was Mervin Darnley's custom to drink, every night, before retiring—Jerry started up-stairs with the waiter.

As he neared the staircase leading to the upper story, he halted in dumb astonishment. Reginald Darnley was leaning against the balustrade, as if awaiting his approach.

"Come on, Jerry. Do I frighten you?" said and asked the young man.

"Is it you, sure enough, Mr. Reginald?"

"Yes—don't I look like myself? But, stop a moment, Jerry—I want you to do me a favor. I'm very dry; I want a glass of ale. Won't you bring me one? I was near the house when I first felt that I wanted it; and I knew if I saw you, you'd give it to me."

"Take this one, Mr. Reginald, an' I'll go get another for up stairs—"

"Oh, no; go get one for *me*. It will only take you a minute; and here's a quarter for you. I'll hold the waiter till you come back."

Eager to serve one for whom his esteem was not yet shaken, and not pausing to consider the singularity of Reginald's presence, Jerry handed over the waiter, and started to procure another glass of the beverage.

When he returned, Reginald drank the ale, thanked the faithful old servitor, and withdrew from the house.

Five minutes later, Jerry stood before his employer, extending the waiter that Reginald had held for a few moments in the hall.

"Close the door, Jerry."

"Yes, sir," promptly obeying the order.

Mervin Darnley took in his hand the glass containing the beaded liquor, and looked long into its amber depth.

Once he raised it slowly before the light, then lowered it again; once he put it to his lips, and withdrew it without tasting.

"Can it be?" he murmured, lowly; "would Reginald do such a thing?—no, no; I can not believe it. I'll drink—I—" he had, for the second time, placed the glass to his lips, yet paused, hesitated, sipped not one drop.

Jerry watched him, with a mixed feeling of wonder and astonishment.

"Wait, Jerry." Darnley whistled, and, in obedience to the familiar call, a pet spaniel came from behind a large easy chair, showing pleasure at its master's notice.

"Come, 'Snap'—come, my little fellow. Jerry, watch."

"Yes, sir." No need of the command—Jerry was straining his eyes.

The spaniel caressed its master's feet, and seemed joyed that it was called. Darnley smoothed its glossy hair, absently, as if hesitating in some course he had resolved upon.

Suddenly he forced open the dog's mouth, and poured the entire contents of the glass down its throat.

Jerry's eyes grew wider; his lower jaw fell a little; he was too amazed to speak, as he watched the spaniel slink away after such harsh, unexpected treatment.

"That will do, Jerry. No ale to-night."

The gardener related the singular occurrence to the other domestics. All wondered what it meant; and he was not the only one who dreamed strangely that night, in consequence of taxing the brain in an effort at solving the problem of Mervin Darnley's action.

But he soon learned what it meant, or partially so; for, about noon, next day, the manufacturer summoned him.

Under a solemn pledge of secrecy, the serving-man was led into the library, and his employer pointed toward a far corner.

There lay the spaniel, curled in a glossy heap, seeming to slumber. But the dog did not now come at the call of its master; not a muscle moved when Darnley whistled and coaxed; and Jerry, going up to it, saw that it was dead.

"Jerry,"—the voice of the speaker was awfully sepulchral—"do you understand what that means? The ale you brought, last night, was *poisoned!* Had I drank it, I would now be dead as that dog!"

CHAPTER XIII.

FLINT AND STEEL.

"In all her lovely grace she disappeared."
—BAILLIE.

CHRISTOPHER CREWLY'S summons at the door of the gloomy edifice seemed not to have been heard by the occupants.

"Umph!" grunted the lawyer, impatiently, fidgeting about; "guess they're in bed."

The others half-stayed their breaths in the sensations of eagerness and expectancy which worked upon them.

"Thud! thud! thud! *thud!*" again the umbrella rattled against the door, and this time with savage vehemence.

"Fine chance to cool off, this!" muttered Crewly, with a pucker of his lips, a scrape of his throat, and resuming his uneasy movements.

Presently, a faint step sounded in the hall. Some one was approaching. Crewly straightened his hat on his head, adjusted his umbrella under his arm, and fixed his eye on the keyhole.

"Madam, good-evening—yours forever, much. Crewly—Chris Crewly—L. L. D., I am; come with power of law. No fooling; saw it—saw it, not an hour ago, at the back window. Cave! No use to growl; you're boxed. See? Come in here." The last to those who accompanied him.

He pushed past the one who opened the door—closely followed by his friends—and when they stood in the broad hall, he turned about to speak again.

He saw a slender, beautiful form, drawn to its full hight; a shapely head, poised in a way that bespoke defiance; a pair of black, lustrous eyes, which fired with an angry look; and a mouth whose ripe lips were compressed in a stern expression of feature.

It was Orle Deice. Her soft cheeks flushed, and her bosom heaved; she contemplated the comers with a haughty glance, and her manner was that of one who awaited an explanation of what might be considered an unwarranted intrusion.

Her beauty engaged Crewly's attention. Her carriage set him to thinking. For several seconds, he looked at her in silence.

"My name's Crewly," he said, at last, pausing after it, as if he expected his words to produce some remarkable effect.

"Well, sir?" she inquired, in a cold voice, carrying her head haughtier than before.

The ice was broken, though; and Crewly, with a nod of satisfaction, immediately pursued:

"Aha! yes—well? Now, then—you've got a girl in this house who doesn't belong here. She's been abducted. I saw her at a back window. We've come with power of law—correct system—and there's no use in equivocating. See? Business. Trot her out. Give her up. Hand her over. Surrender—put you in jail, if you don't. Fact!"

"Your words, sir, are simply enigmatical," was the calm rejoinder. "You have rather overstepped bounds, I think, by entering my house in such an unceremonious manner. It requires further explanation than what you have given, and I demand it. I can not comprehend what you mean."

"Superfluous magniloquence, madam—I repeat, *very* superfluous. Take me for a flat? Um!—won't *do*. Lower your head. Come to the point. Can't fool with me. The girl—where's she, eh?"

"To what girl do you allude?"

Crewly gazed at her, studyingly. Bernard and Waldron began to despair. Had Crewly met his match?

"Poh! — stuff! Good actress. Fine chance in New York for good actresses; but we've got sufficient of that regiment, madam, here in Richmond, without looking for them in private houses. Come—stop this nonsense, and bring out the girl. You'd *better!*" he concluded, with a pucker of his lips, and a peculiar intonation of voice, that told he was growing tired of cavil; and one of his forefingers was leveled significantly at her, twirling, the while.

Orle Deice colored deeply as the lawyer continued to address her in his sharp, brief style. But she was playing a part, and proved herself, as Crewly had asserted, an admirable actress.

"I do not understand you fully, sir," she said; "but I may infer that you seek some one in my house who, you suppose, I am forcibly detaining."

"Ex*act*ly! Now, bring her out."

"Then you have made a great mistake. There is no one in this house but me."

"Madam, you l—ex*cuse* me, I mean to say, I know better. See?"

"If the word of a lady is insufficient to satisfy you, you had best look for yourself, since you say you come with power of law."

"Precisely what we'll do," he snapped, with another emphatic nod. Then to his companions: "Go to work. Search. Ransack. Open every closet. Sound the walls. Pull the window-curtains. Climb out on the roof. Garret to kitchen. Beware of *trap-doors!* Smells suspicious—perfumery."

"I will accompany them in the search." Orle moved toward the staircase.

"Ex*cuse* me, but you won't," interposed Crewly, placing himself before her. "Now, see—I don't want to be too impudent; but, it strikes me, I ought to keep an eye on you—fact!"

Orle expostulated.

"It is my privilege, sir, to—"

"Can't help it. Won't steal any thing—

be assured. Besides, the place to commence is right here. There's a cupboard—see—behind the stairs. And just throw your eye into that room over there, while we go in here. Now, madam, you'll come in *this* room, with *me*, and there you'll stay till they find her—"

"Sir?"

"Tut! Paregoric. You'll find me the most agreeable company you ever met with—fact!—"

Orle interrupted him.

"Cease this, sir. Your language is insulting. I am accustomed only to the society of gentlemen. No matter what your mission, it does not so far privilege you that you can, with impunity, indulge in the language of a ruffian." She spoke short and quick, and the red flush of indignation suffused her cheeks.

But Crewly replied at once, and his words were shorter, quicker than hers.

"I'm a gentleman, madam—not of leisure, either. When I meet a lady, I'm courteous enough. But let me tell you"—and the steel-gray eyes seemed trying to sparkle—"a true lady *never* sullies her lips with the utterance of a deliberate lie. Now, maybe I'm putting it on too strong, but, as it was not an hour ago that I saw, at the back window of your house, four persons, I know that you utter a falsehood when you say you are the only occupant of the house. See?"

"You will anger me, sir," she exclaimed, biting her lip till the soft skin would almost burst. "I will admit, there have been others than myself in the house to-night—"

"A-ha! I knew it."

"But, that does not prove that they are still here."

Crewly started. He hesitated. Perhaps she spoke the truth. Perhaps they had missed their object—arrived too late; it might be that Cecilia was, even then, being borne away to a more remote place of captivity.

Orle saw her advantage, and her eyes flashed upon him sternly.

"If you're right and I'm wrong," he said, at last, "then you may box my ears, madam, till the skin peels off, as a merit of my impudence. Meantime, we'll wait and see. Step in here."

Deeming it advisable policy to obey, she entered one of the rooms that sided the hall, and he followed her.

When he had wheeled up a chair for her, and seated her, with a bow, he threw himself into another chair near her, placed his umbrella between his knees, hung his hat upon the handle and eyed her steadfastly.

Already had Harry Waldron and Mr. Bernard, in company with the policeman, finished their search of the adjoining room, and were ascending the stairs. Crewly, as he sat like a statue before his prisoner—for such Orle indeed was—heard his friends in the rooms overhead, and, occasionally, the voice of Lacy Bernard calling his daughter's name.

At the expiration of half an hour they returned with the intelligence that there was no one in the house but themselves and Orle Deice—every nook, corner, shadow or conceivable place of concealment had been probed in vain.

Lover and father were despairing.

Crewly appeared greatly perplexed by the result. Orle looked at the lawyer in triumph. Her lips curved in a sarcastic smile.

"Madam," he said, presently, "as I agreed, you are at liberty to box my ears—"

"I desire nothing more than that you leave my house," interrupted she, quickly.

"So be it. Come—we'll go. You'll let us out the back way, please—back basement entrance, you know. See? Haven't looked *down*-stairs yet."

Orle made no objection to this request. She conducted them to the egress named, and, when they were well out, shut the door upon them with a spiteful bang.

"*Pax vobiscum!*" said Crewly, nodding toward the door. "Those hinges won't last long at that rate, madam."

He glanced about him for the policeman who had been dispatched to guard that portion of the house.

It was some time before his eyes used themselves to the surrounding shadows occasioned by the angles of the building.

When, at length, he could discern objects more plainly, his gaze caught a prostrate form, lying face upward, just on the verge of the shadows, and the moonlight discovered the blue coat and shining buttons of the man they sought.

With an exclamation of surprise, he sprung forward.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PROOF.

"Can it be true?—or lie of fancy wrought?
And are his love-words, after all, but naught?"
—Anon.

We left Cecilia Bernard in a fearful situation.

Insensible, limp, powerless in the clutches of the ferocious hag, her life seemed to have faded.

Meg Semper's basilisk eyes were fairly blazing in their fierce, Satanic stare, and both hands were now tenaciously twining about the throat of her victim.

Orle Deice trembled in every muscle. She would have stayed the horrible proceeding; her hands were outstretched and her lips moved, but not a word could she utter; a tortuous power riveted her to the spot whereon she stood. She could not, though she would, bound forward to prevent the murder.

But, there was another actor. The sound of an approaching footstep fell upon their ears, and Nemil, with a malediction on the comer, sprung to the door, his brawny arm raised to strike.

It was Gerard Henricq. In the doorway he paused and quickly took in the scene, while Nemil, upon seeing who it was, vented a grunt and retired across the room.

At the first intimation of an intruder, Meg Semper dropped her half-dead victim, and, like a tiger at bay, she faced about, flourishing her long, glistening knife.

Orle tottered back a few steps and murmured a thanksgiving.

Murder was prevented by the opportune arrival of a fifth party.

"What's this?" demanded Henricq, frowning. "What are you doing, Meg Semper?"

"Herwin!" gasped Orle, pointing to the motionless form that lay upon the floor. "Murder! Quick!—help me," snatching up the pitcher of water and kneeling at Cecilia's side.

"Let her die!" screamed Meg. "Let her die! I did it! I choked the life out of her! She was loved by Reginald Darnley, and so it was a favor; and I've sworn to kill all who knows a favor at the hands of a Darnley. Let her—" But he pushed her aside and hastened to assist Orle.

On the throat of the unconscious girl were the hag's finger-marks—purpling and disfiguring the fair skin—and Orle feared that Meg had done her devilish work thoroughly. But there were signs of life, which grew more and more apparent as she and the bogus old man applied themselves to her recovery.

"Oh! Herwin! is—is she alive?" Orle's tone was one of keenest anxiety, and she bathed and sprinkled the pale temples of her helpless rival, with a trembling hand.

"Yes," replied Henricq (as we shall continue to have him figure in this title); "but the room's too hot. She needs air. Here, Nemil, pick her up. Let's carry her down to the cellar. Meg Semper, you've nearly committed a foul murder—"

"I don't care!—do you hear?" she yelped, savagely.

"They punish murderers with the hangman's noose."

"I say I don't care!" more savage than before, and glowering fiercely at him.

He turned from her with an expression of disgust he did not attempt to conceal.

"Come, Nemil, bring the girl."

When the African took Cecilia in his arms, Meg Semper—who suddenly relaxed into a sullen silence—snatched up the lamp, and led the way.

The cellars of the house were dry and cool. Their atmosphere tended greatly toward resuscitating the unfortunate girl.

When Cecilia opened her eyes—like one awakening from a frightful nightmare—she gazed slowly around upon the stony sides of her prison, and soon discovered, by the dim light of the flickering candle, the beautiful being to whom she knew she owed her misery.

Orle was alone with her rival. The beauty's head was bowed in thought. She appeared not to notice Cecilia's recovery, but gazed fixedly at the hard earth floor.

Starting to her elbow, and brushing back the wavy tresses that disheveled upon her brow, she pondered upon the lovely picture.

"Woman—" The word broke upon her lips.

Orle started. The look she now fastened upon Cecilia was not what it was when the mastering emotions of an encouraged hatred burned within her bosom; there was a mild, unspeakable expression in the large, lustrous eyes; the face was calm, and her mien gentle.

"Cecilia Bernard," she said, softly, "I have nearly killed you."

"What has happened?" The inquiry was one of bewilderment. "I can not remember all—yet—that woman-fiend! where is she? Oh! yes, yes—she choked me. I was dying. But I am alive. You have brought me here—what is this silent place?"

"No matter. Let it pass. You are saved. Your escape was very, very narrow."

Cecilia shuddered. Then she arose, with difficulty, to her feet. She felt very weak; one hand, almost involuntarily, sought a projecting stone in the wall for support.

Orle advanced to her.

"Cecilia Bernard, *would* you try to win Reginald Darnley from me, when you know how much I love him?" The mildness in which she put the question was peculiar; there was a strange something lurking in the low accents, and Cecilia, studying the face and form of her lovely rival, hesitated.

"Reginald Darnley?"

"Yes. Would you do it, knowing how desperate I am in my love for him?"

"Do you, then, love him so deeply?"

"Yes," she cried, with eager fervency, "he is my idol! Next to my God do I worship him! I have been harsh with you—even too harsh. But it is past now; I was controlled by passion. You see me calm—see me humbler in that calmness, appealing to your heart. I can kneel to you, to beg that you leave him to me. Promise me you will not marry him. You can not love him as much as I do; I know you can not. There may be others—yes, I am sure of it!—who could make you happy; but not so with me—there is no one on the wide earth but him, who can give me happiness! I plead—shall I kneel?"

How great this change in Orle Deice! No longer blind, in the fiery impetus of hatred, but calmed and suffering, pleading favor of a rival. Hers was a quick-tempered blood; yet her nature was clad in the untarnished gold of purity. And when she saw how near fatal had proved her ungoverned animosity, her conscience struck out the vile demon which, for a time, had entered her heart, and left her *herself*—gentle, loving, beautiful in spirit, as in face and form.

Her lustrous eyes were dimming with half-checked tears, as she thus appealed. She took Cecilia's hands in her own, and waited for a reply.

Cecilia was thinking deeply. She, too, loved Reginald; but was that love as deep set as in Orle Deice? Did *she* feel that her whole existence was bound up in an affection for this man? Could she be generous? Would she relinquish him in favor of another? And—as she pondered in this way, she also thought of Henry Waldron, and wondered if she had, at last, concluded that she loved the latter best.

"Reginald is very dear to you?" she said, musingly, while her blue eyes wandered to the floor.

"More so than my own life!"

"And—does—he—love—you?"

"Oh, yes! But it was his pledge to you that drew him from me—he said it was nothing but that."

"And not love?"

"No, no; his love is mine. He has told me so."

"How can I believe that he would so deceive me?" The words were a question, put to self, and Cecilia was weighing what the other said.

"Indeed, it is true. Reginald Darnley loves me before all women, and honor, alone, to allegiance due you, robbed me of him."

"If you could prove this—"

"I can—I will," interrupted Orle, hopefully.

A point seemed decided in Cecilia's mind.

"Do it," she said; "prove what you say, and I will give him up." But, even as she promised, her faith in Reginald's constancy was great. She doubted if Orle could prove what she agreed.

"Oh! thank you. You have made me happy, do you know it? For I can and will prove that Reginald loves me, and then you'll give him up."

"Yes—I'll give him up," absently.

"Then listen. You must trust me; you must be guided entirely by me. I am going to leave Richmond, to-night, and you must accompany me—"

"How? I can not do that—my father—mother—"

"Allay their fears by a letter, which, I promise, they shall get before we go. Do not refuse me this. My whole future depends upon it."

"But where would you take me?"

"To Washington."

"Washington!"

"Because Reginald leaves for Washington to-morrow morning."

"Ah!" interrupted Cecilia, thoughtfully; "the note I received said he was called away."

"I wrote that myself," exclaimed Orle. "That has nothing to do with it. When I penned the lines, I did not know that they were part truth. It was only a little while ago that I learned of his proposed departure, and his destination. Will you go?"

After a few moments' reflection, Cecilia acceded, though it was with hesitancy.

A sound of numerous footsteps on the stairs leading to the cellar, broke in upon their conversation, and Meg Semper, with Gerard Henricq and Nemil close at her heels, dashed upon the scene.

At sight of the hag Cecilia shrunk back, trembling. Orle pressed her hand tighter, and assured her that she had nothing to fear.

"By Satan!" screamed Meg, immediately, "they're after us. Quick, Orle Deice!—up-stairs and see who it is. There—hear 'em knocking. Will the girl go 'long with us?"

"Yes, Meg, she has consented—"

"Good enough, then. Now, away. Here, you"—to Cecilia—"put on this hat and shawl, and come." She carried Cecilia's hat and shawl, and, handing these to their owner, she turned toward the basement entry.

"Fear nothing," said Henricq, as he took her by the hand, and led her after Meg Semper and the African.

Cecilia, with a fluttering heart, and bewildered, uneasy mind, followed him, while Orle hurried up-stairs to answer the summons at the front door.

The hag swung open the basement door, and darted out—into the grasp of a policeman.

She uttered a fierce oath, and clinched for a struggle.

Meg Semper was, in herself, a match for the man; and when the African, quickly joining her, lent his own powerful strength and ax-blows of his enormous fist, the officer reeled backward, blinded by his own blood, and sunk insensible to the sward.

The encounter was a brief one; so brief, that Cecilia had not time to comprehend what it meant.

And, in a moment, Nemil's gruff voice said:

"Come."

Meg Semper had started forward, and was now some distance ahead.

Her hand still held by Gerard Henricq, Cecilia moved after the African; and the large, gloomily-silent house was soon out of sight in their rear.

(*To be continued—Commenced in No. 90.*)

Adria, the Adopted:

OR,

The Mystery of Ellesford Grange.

AN AMERICAN ROMANCE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "BRANDED," "SEA HARVEST," "NYMPHIA'S BRAVERY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Kenneth Hastings returned to Crofton after a prolonged business tour. He had done well, both for himself and his employers, and the Russell Brothers pronounced high encomiums upon his ability and diligence.

It was here that Adria's missive, containing information of her father's death and her own desolate condition reached him, nearly three months after it was dispatched.

It had followed him from place to place, until it lodged for a time in an obscure office where he had not deemed it necessary to leave his address. From thence it traveled to the Dead Letter Office, from whence it returned to the Russell Brothers, they having inclosed her envelop in a letter of instructions which failed to reach the agent at the proper time.

He was shocked and grieved. With scarcely an hour's delay he set out for the Grange. It was quite dark when the train whizzed up to the little bay-shore station, where he alighted. A heavy rain was falling, and the wind, sweeping up the coast, drove it in drenching gusts; but, deterred by neither the hour nor the weather, he made his way immediately to the Grange.

But here he met with bitter disappointment. Adria had left suddenly, more than a week before. Valeria had gone out in the early afternoon, and had not yet returned. The housekeeper thought she would remain over night with Mrs. Templeton. Mr. Kerr, too, had been gone since morning. There was no one from whom he could obtain the definite information regarding the whereabouts of his darling which he required. So he went back to the village, to procure a night's lodging at the single public house the place afforded.

As he walked, he could hear a dull noise, above the roar of the bay—a heavy, thumping sound, but he gave little heed to it. Why should he? He knew nothing of the awful peril it was heralding for Adria.

He remembered the location of the village chapel, and, coming abreast of it, was surprised to see it alight upon such a night. It seemed to him there was some unusual commotion within, and he hastened to the doorway to ascertain the cause.

At the instant a man ran down the street, uttering hoarse cries of alarm. Kenneth called to him, but he ran on, unheeding. A second messenger came up, less hurriedly, as the people within the church reached the door.

"The ice has broken above, and gorged in the river's turn. The flats are flooded with back-water, and unless the way is opened speedily, the stream will cut a shorter channel across to the bay."

There was a wild shriek from the group at the door—a man's scream—which chilled the blood of the hearers.

Luke Peters raved wildly, and strove to free himself from those holding him in custody.

"They are in the mill!" he cried. "The old mill on the river bank. They will die there—die without aid; be choked by the cold water, or crushed and mangled with the ice. Let me go, I say! Are you men, that you will let them perish without an effort?"

His captors thought it a ruse to escape from their hands. But Colonel Templeton, appalled by the awful danger threatening the girl he had been instrumental in placing there, confirmed his story.

"Miss Ellesford is at the mill," he said, knowing, in that moment of excitement, no one would question how she came there.

Kenneth, in the fast-gathering crowd, sprung forward, with an agonized cry.

"For God's sake, let no time be lost! Let some one, who knows the way, lead on, and all you who have men's hearts, find tools for cutting the ice, and follow quickly as you can."

Luke Peters caught sight of the young man's excited face, and relapsed into sudden calm.

"It is her son," he whispered, to himself.

Then he watched his opportunity, as the panic spread, and, darting unexpectedly away out of his captors' grasp, was lost in the crowd and the thick darkness beyond. He had been handcuffed, but, with a violent effort, he tore his left hand through the clasping fetter, never heeding the lacerated flesh.

It proved as the man had said. All of the low ground was flooded, and the occasional crash of trees in the direction of the stream's current, told how rapidly the bank was being undermined.

A faint glimmer of light, far out of reach of the men and women flocking there, declared the position of the mill, and that its inmates were yet living.

"Thank God!" went up, fervently, from the assembly. But their position seemed hopeless. No mortal aid could bridge that sea of stiller water between, but where the immense ice-cakes heaved and crushed together with dull, heavy sound.

A few fishermen had dragged their boats to the water's edge, but there was no chance of launching them. The only possibility of their escape lay in giving speedy vent to the rising flood.

Kenneth was foremost in action. A myriad of lanterns flashed their lights from the shore. With ax in hand, he sprung out upon the ice-wall, piled high across the channel, and called loudly for others to follow him. Then the keen steel rung down with steady blows, and, in a second more, a score of able men were at his side, devoting all their strength to the perilous task.

Luke Peters crouched out of range of the lights, glaring at the tiny point of flame far away in the midst of the seething element. Twice he had attempted to reach it by springing from cake to cake of the surging ice, and twice he had been driven back by the impassable, yawning gulfs which opened before him.

A group of fisherwomen, clustered upon the higher ground, now approached nearer him.

"It's gorging here," one said. "I knew it was out there beyant the mill, or it couldn't have stood so long."

Luke drew himself nearer the water's edge and gazed steadily out. It was as the woman said. The ice had formed, in an unbroken line, as far as his sight reached.

He went to the one who had spoken, and asked for her lantern. His wild, pallid face frightened her. He extended his hand, and she saw that it was torn and bleeding.

"Yer hurt, my man," she said, with rough kindness. "Hold ye here, and I'll bind it with a bit o' my gownd!"

He laughed, and held up his other hand with the irons dangling from the wrist.

"Now will you give it to me?" he demanded. "You were kind, though, to offer it," he added, in a changed tone, "but I don't feel my hurt."

He took the lantern from her hand and stepped cautiously out upon the lodged fragments. On and on, picking his way carefully, leaping from point to point, crawling on hands and knees over jagged heaps, losing his foothold sometimes and sliding almost into certain destruction, but preserved through all, until he could distinguish the light in the mill, his guiding-star, growing nearer and nearer to him as he alternately lost and again caught it in his sight.

Then the steadfast line began to lead him away from it. He left its comparative safety and sprung from one to another of the floating masses. He could see the blacker proportions of the mill loom out of the darkness, and the light he had watched so eagerly was just ahead of him.

The water filling into the lower story of the mill, the two women had with difficulty ascended a broken old stairway to the second floor. But the flood followed stealthily. Tearing loose such boards as yielded to their strength, they lashed them, with the blankets cut in strips, into the form of a raft. On this floating platform they were raised, until it was even with the windows from which the sashes had fallen in decay. Then they saw the light gleaming over the space between them and the shore. It was still raining, but more gently now, and the wind was lulling to a calm.

Peters came gradually on, coolly calculating every move he made, until within a half-dozen rods of the mill. There the water ran more swiftly, driving the ice in another direction. He plunged into the current striking boldly for the guiding light.

He was covered from head to foot with bruises received on the way. His hands were fearfully lacerated and so benumbed that he used them with difficulty, his clothes were torn, and bloody from his wounds, yet he struggled desperately on.

The women strained their eyes toward the object they knew to be a man striving to reach them. A moment more and he would be safely with them.

Then an undercurrent cast up a sharp-edged mass which crushed against him, and forced the mangled form close up to the refuge it had sought.

The women cried out with sharp horror. Then Adria clutched him as he was going down, and with their united strength they drew him upon the platform.

He was not dead, but senseless, and so crushed that life could not long remain. They did what they could for him, and waited hopelessly for the death which they felt would take the three together.

Every minute held an age of torturing suspense. The water rose steadily, and the long night wore on.

At last came a loud huzza from below. The workmen had effected an outlet for the dammed-up element. They clambered back to the solid ground, and the torrent rushed madly through the breach, widening it with every second's space until the entire gorge was swept away.

Gray dawn was breaking in the east when kindly men penetrated to the mill, and the rescue of those within it.

Foremost was Kenneth, who clasped Adria to his heart with a joyful sob of thanksgiving. Reginald Templeton stood back, cursing the fate which had saved her for his rival when she was lost to him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Luke Peters lay at the Grange, dying.

Valeria had given orders for the removal of the sufferers to her home, as soon as they were rescued from their peril. Nelly and Adria suffered only temporary inconvenience from the exposure they had sustained. Perhaps their sympathy for the man who had so rashly forfeited his claim on life to reach them, prevented more serious consequences.

Adria felt herself amply rewarded for all her recent trials by her lover's presence, and the assurances he gave her that they should not part again.

Reginald had not been seen since the party succeeded in reaching the mill. Valeria grew nervously anxious. What would be the result of the strategy which had made her his wife?

A note was placed in her hand during the day. She grew sick at heart, and went away by herself ere she opened it:

"You have usurped my name, so wear it, and flaunt it to your heart's content. You'll get no further satisfaction from me. I don't blame you much for the part you played, now I know the girl would have died before she had bent to my will. I shall seek my Lethe where no familiar associations shall revive things past.
"R. T."

The guard whose duty it was to keep Peters in charge, could not but perceive his helpless condition. The chief officer detailed two men to remain at the Grange, but otherwise he was left free of restraint.

He suffered excruciatingly for a few hours, and then his pain almost entirely left him. This, the physician said, was a symptom that mortification had already set upon the crushed body. He was very weak, but conscious.

At his desire, a magistrate was summoned, and he made a full confession of past crimes.

"I'd let them go to the death with me," he said, "but some I can tell may help *her* in getting back her rights."

Nearly as possible in his own words, but omitting details unconnected with this story, is the following narrative:

"The woman who calls herself Nelly Kent is truly Helen Ellesford," he began. "I wanted to marry her once, but she knew better than I. She was never meant for the like of me. But I didn't think so then, and when she refused to listen to my love, I swore to take revenge for her scorn of me. I hated Hugh Ellesford from the moment I first saw him, when he came to her rescue after I, in my mad folly, had insulted her in the street.

"I watched them both and saw the growing intimacy. I waited to strike her a blow through him which should leave her desolate on the brink of expected happiness. But they eluded even my vigilance. They married, and were gone so suddenly that I found myself foiled.

"I knew he was an American, so I sailed for this country, and for years I wandered throughout the United States, seeking some trace of them.

"I found it in their boy, then about four years old, whom they had sent with his nurse to the Virginia sea-coast. I knew the woman, Juana; and the boy from his resemblance to his mother.

"I stole the child, and afterward traced the woman back to the Grange. I was satisfied, for the time, with my meed of revenge, and left them to mourn together over the supposed death of their babe.

"I took the lad to a village in an Eastern State, representing myself as his father, and reduced by illness to such destitution that I could not properly provide for him.

"I was directed to a middle-aged, childless couple, by name Hastings, who consented to adopt him as their own, provided I would make no future effort to reclaim him. I willingly acceded to their terms, only stipulating that they should let me hear of him at stated intervals. A few weeks later the woman died suddenly. The man removed to a manufacturing town in a neighboring State, but, true to our bargain, kept me informed regarding the boy. The latter was known by the name of his adopted father, and by most people was supposed to be his own child.

"In time, Hastings also died. But I still assured myself of the boy's continued residence in Crofton. It is he whom you know as Kenneth Hastings!"

Nelly Kent, or as we must now call her, Mrs. Ellesford, gave a sudden cry.

"My boy!"

Kenneth clasped her outstretched hand, and, laying his bronzed face against her cheek, whispered:

"Mother!"

The two, long separated, were united at last, and each heart recognized the mutual claim.

Peters continued:

"For a while I traveled about with a circus company, but tiring of that, I went to New York, and there allied myself with a class of gentlemanly knaves, whose profession embraced any thing from cutting a man's throat down to picking his pocket.

"My skill as a gymnast made me a valuable acquisition to their number. We did not confine our operations to that city alone, but had branch organizations throughout the country. It afterward fell to my lot to go from place to place carrying tidings too important to be trusted to cipher dispatches.

"On one of these occasions I fell in with Alan Templeton. He hired me to do some trifling jobs for him that were of a nature gentlemen don't care to be connected with. I found afterward that with these he was merely sounding me and my trustworthiness.

"At last he intrusted me with the work he had been preparing for all the time.

"His wife had once been affianced to Hugh Ellesford, but Colonel Templeton's overtures won her, and she eloped with the latter. Notwithstanding this conclusive evidence of her preference, Templeton had always entertained a suspicion that the lady cared more for her lover than his (the colonel's) wife had any right to do.

"I was deputed to keep an espionage over the lady and her actions. She was at The Firs then, while her husband was absent during a great portion of the time. Well, I executed my task faithfully, never losing sight of her when without her door, and carefully noting all visitors.

"At the end of a fortnight I had discovered nothing which could be construed as impropriety in her actions. Then one morning she walked out beyond The Firs into the Ellesford grounds, and there encountered the master of the Grange. It ap-

peared as a purely accidental meeting, though they held a lengthened conversation which I was not near enough to overhear.

"Colonel Templeton came down from the city the same evening, and sought me at once for my report. He lost control over himself as I had never known him before to do, when he learned of that meeting. He rushed away, cautioning me to remain about the vicinity, as he might find work for me that night.

"A couple of hours later, he came out to me again. I don't know what happened in that time, but his face was hard and expressionless as a mask, only his eyes held a devilish light.

"'She has gone to him,' he said, and his voice was perfectly cool. 'You must put that man out of the way. A thousand dollars in your pocket the moment the job is done!'"

"He knew of my hatred for Ellesford, and had previously got from me the fact of his private marriage, and the secret of the boy's existence. He knew he could depend upon me. He quietly gave me the details of the plan he proposed following.

"We went together to the Grange, gaining ingress without trouble. Ellesford kept no servant except the woman Juana, so there was little fear of chance discovery. We had intended lying in wait until the dead of the night; but, while it was yet early, there was a sudden commotion in the house, and a woman rushed past our hiding-place.

"Almost involuntarily, we followed her, but, even then, Colonel Templeton retained his composure and securely locked the doors communicating with the kitchen and adjoining departments. The door of the parlor was wide open, and we saw Hugh Ellesford's wife confronting her husband and the other woman, but she rushed out, never seeing us. Templeton's hand for an instant closed upon my arm like a vice.

"'Now!' he said, and we sprung in upon them. Mrs. Templeton had fainted. Her husband hurled Ellesford back, and catching her up, hurried away.

"When I saw the man who had won Helen's love, I lost all sense except my bitter hate for him. He saw murder in my face, and put up his hands as if to defend himself, but he might as well have tried to resist fate itself. I had a keen-edged knife in my hand, but he fought fiercely, and I could not succeed in giving him a fatal wound. I threw the blade away, and, springing at him suddenly, fastened my hands on his throat.

"He tried to speak. 'Helen, my wife—' he muttered. His words maddened me still more, and I choked the utterance in his throat. Even when I knew he was quite dead, I beat and stamped upon him.

"I never remembered how I got away from the place. When I came to myself, I had crawled back to The Firs, and Colonel Templeton had hidden me in an unused cellar. He kept me there until the immediate excitement died away, and then procured me a disguise, by means of which I succeeded in making my escape."

The confession was duly signed and witnessed, and he lay back completely exhausted.

Old Juana, who had been sent for, had crept into the room silently during the recital. She was now seen upon her knees, silent tears of thanksgiving rolling down her cheeks.

"The Blessed Virgin be praised," she cried, brokenly. Then calming herself, recited her version.

"After my mistress left me, that dreadful night, I was stupefied for a moment, dreading what might come. When I did attempt to follow her, I found the door locked against me. Then I heard sounds as of a violent struggle. I crouched down on the floor, fearing and praying.

"All became still for a time. I waited there, not daring to move. Horrible sights kept defining themselves before my eyes, against the blank darkness. I waited and prayed through all that terrible night, made worse by the awful silence in the house beyond.

"Daylight came, after what seemed ages of suspense. Then I stole out at the back entrance, through the garden walks to the front. The door was wide open, and there was blood on the steps. I grew sick and faint, but put down the weakness, and went steadily in.

"It proved, as I feared. My master lay murdered, and in a pool of blood on the floor I found the locket which my mistress always wore. I secured it, and also the knife which lay at one side, lest it, too, might tell a tale. The locket I carefully cleaned, and put by in the secret drawer; the knife I buried where I knew it could not be found.

"Afterward I gave the alarm. I supposed that my mistress had committed the deed, rendered furious by the other woman's presence there; and assumed my part to ward off any suspicion which might betray her.

"When months passed, and I learned of her whereabouts—"

The physician at the bedside stopped the woman's story with a gesture. A change was coming over Luke Peters' face.

"I'd like to hear her say she forgives me," he muttered. "Where is she—Nelly!"

Mrs. Ellesford laid her trembling hand on his.

"Ask one mightier than I to forgive, Pedro. I hold no anger against you—may God pardon you as freely."

He seemed satisfied; then some remembrance disturbed him.

"The papers," he muttered. "I looked for them in the drawer, but they were gone. You must find them to prove—to prove—"

His mind wandered for a moment, but reverted back to the subject.

"The certificates were not there," he repeated.

"They are here, my man!"

Luke passed his fingers over them, then his hand fell helplessly away.

"I can't see," he murmured. Then he sunk gradually into unconsciousness, and passed quietly away.

Bitter tears were shed over the death-bed of that crime-laden man. But those whom he had injured most, rejoiced that Death had snatched his victim, rather than he should have perished through execution of the law.

Mrs. Ellesford and Kenneth assumed legal and undisputed possession at the Grange.

There was a quiet marriage ceremony, where Adria placed her hand in that of her heart's choice, and promised to "love, honor and obey," until death should them part.

CHAPTER XXV.

Colonel Templeton was lodged in a cell of the county jail, arrested for instigating and being accessory to the murder of the late Hugh Ellesford. Luke Peters' confession was in the hands of the law, and that powerful organ lost no time in enforcing its requirements.

He paced the floor with measured tread, his face passive, and lip scornfully curved, as of old. He was not one to shrink from even such danger as now encompassed him.

There were footsteps in the corridor, the iron door swung open, and the jailor ushered in Mrs. Templeton. She was scarcely more worn or depressed than she had been before.

She went to him, laying her hand timidly on his arm.

"Alan, my husband!"

"Well, Irene?"

He did not look at her, but stared steadfastly before him.

"Oh, Alan? Alan!" All her forced composure gave way, and she clung sobbingly to him. "Oh, my husband, you must believe me now—now that we part forever. Oh, Alan! I gave my very soul to you. It was cruel to ever doubt me."

He put out his hand, touching her face gently.

"I think I see more clearly now, Irene; but I crushed out my sentimentality long ago. Don't cry, and don't fear that I'll suffer the fate they're planning for me."

She grew quiet at once.

"I know," she said. "Look here, Alan!"

She drew from beneath her cloak a file and a tiny saw. He took them, concealing them about his own person.

"Thank you, Irene!"

They conversed quietly on temporal things, until her time had expired. Then he clasped her in his arms a moment, and kissed her tenderly.

"You will be happier without me," he said.

All her heart's agony burst out in a hopeless cry.

"I shall die," she said, "and then I may find peace."

A few nights afterward there was a great cry raised in the little village. Colonel Templeton had broken jail. The forces rallied in pursuit, but he escaped them all. Tidings of him were never wafted back.

Notwithstanding Valeria's ungenerous conduct, and her complicity in Adria's abduction, the latter would still have interceded for her, and secured her a permanent home at the Grange. But Valeria steadily refused the unmerited kindness.

She went instead to Mrs. Templeton.

"I am Reginald's wife," she said. "I love him so that he can not but come back to me some day. Let me stay with you and care for you unntil then."

And Reginald's mother made her kindly welcome.

Mrs. Templeton failed rapidly from the moment she was assured of her husband's safety. Before the summer passed she sent a tremulous line to the widow of Hugh Ellesford:

"I am dying. Will you not come to me?
"Irene Templeton."

She went at once. Only pity was in her heart, when she compared the fate of this sorrow-stricken woman with her own—completely happy, now.

"I sent for you," Mrs. Templeton said. "I wanted to assure you of your husband's loyal truth.

"I had been ill of a fever, and, recovering but slowly, came to The Firs, believing country air would do me good. My husband"—she spoke as though deprecating anger against him—"had always been jealous of my former attachment, utterly without cause, for I gave him my whole heart when I married him.

"During one of my morning walks, as I began to grow stronger, I met Mr. Ellesford. I was looking wretchedly ill, and he spoke to me with kindly solicitude. I had ventured further than I should have done, and he, leading me to a seat, declared I must rest before attempting to return. Afterward, he gave me his arm back to my own gate.

"That night my husband burst in upon me, in an insane rage. He accused me of faithlessness—untruth to him whom I loved better than my own life; taunted me with holding clandestine interviews with my former admirer.

"His bitter words drove me wild. First, I had clung to him, protesting my innocence; then, realizing fully the injustice he did me, I disdained to refute the charges he presented.

"My silence only aggravated him.

"'Why don't you go to him openly?' he asked, mockingly. 'I was so readily blinded, I wonder you have not faced me with him as your dearest friend.'

"The fever coursed through my veins again. I was not myself, or I would never have answered and acted so rashly.

"'I will go to him,' I said, 'and he shall prove to you how wrongly you have accused me.'

"I fled, then, out through the gathering night, straight to the Grange. There my strength deserted me, and I sunk down, weak and trembling, on the threshold. Your husband found me there, and, taking me in his arms, as though I had been a child, carried me within.

"He rung for lights, and for wine, with which to revive me, but the woman bringing them misunderstood the situation. She spoke sullenly, and acted strangely. Much annoyed, Mr. Ellesford dismissed her from the room, and endeavored to soothe me, until I could tell him my errand.

"It was a hard task to reveal my husband's unjust suspicions; but he gathered my mission, and promised to accompany me back to The Firs, and add his testimony to my own, soon as I should be strong enough to return.

"While we waited, he told me of you, and of his happy life. 'I know you will keep my secret,' he said.

"Then you burst in upon us, and beyond you, through the open doorway, I saw my husband's face, with a vengeful look upon it which struck my heart cold and numb.

"I fainted then, and knew no more until I awoke in my own chamber, and heard them talk of the mysterious tragedy enacted at the Grange.

"A nobler heart never beat in man's bosom than the one you wronged by doubting it."

Helen Ellesford shed remorseful tears. But she was happier afterward than she could have been without the knowledge.

Mrs. Templeton lingered on through the warmer months, and went with the falling leaves.

The Firs had been secured to her, and at her death she bequeathed the place to Valeria.

And there the latter waits still—a lonely woman, hoping against hope, that the man who is her husband only in name may yet return to her.

The happy ones at the Grange do all they can to relieve her solitude, and she has expanded better qualities beneath the influence which could forgive and bury recollections of her own selfishness.

Let us hope she may at least become reconciled to her lot.

THE END.

The Midnight Duel.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

East Tennessee has been truly called "the Switzerland of America," for its mountains and valleys, its rivers and forests form bold, magnificent scenery.

Upon one of the most beautiful spots of the Little Tennessee river, stand, or rather lie, the ruins of an old fort, built many years ago, before our grandfathers had won for us our independence.

Ruin and decay mark the spot, and the luxuriant moss that covers all serves but to make the place more time-worn. But to my story.

A few years ago I went to this wild portion of the State, upon a hunting expedition, my only companions being my horse and dog. Within the ruins of the old fort I had constructed a small wigwam, and had rendered it quite comfortable by the things brought with me, for a week's stay in the mountains.

When tired with the day's sport, I would throw mysIf down upon the moss-grown embattlements, and, in the enjoyment of a good cigar, would watch the setting sun, and, almost with awe, contemplate the beautiful scenery that surrounded me.

In one of these reveries I fell asleep, and was awakened at length by the sound of voices. I started to my feet, and sought my rifle, for there were a number of outlaws still living about in the mountains.

It was night now, and the moon was throwing upon river and valley a perfect flood of light, and out upon the quiet water I discovered a small-boat, shaping its course for a landing at the foot of the old fort. In the boat I discovered two forms, and the voices that aroused me came from that direction. Stepping back within the shadow of the overhanging trees, I bade my dog lie still, petted my horse to keep him quiet, and calmly awaited the approach of my visitors, whoever they might be.

I had not long to wait, for, a few moments after, heavy steps broke the underbrush, and a man ascended the bank and rested in the open area of the fort.

"I see nothing of them yet, Pomp," he called out to his companion, who was fastening the boat, I judge.

"That St. John Bartlette ain't going to miss coming, you needn't fear," rejoined the companion, who had ascended the bank and joined the first comer. As they stood there, in the bright moonlight, I had an opportunity of examining my unexpected guests. The one who first ascended the hill was a young man of about twenty-five, with dark hair and eyes, and an exceedingly handsome face and figure. His companion was a tall, powerfully-built negro, evidently the body-servant of the young planter, for such I judged him to be, as, some miles down the river, there were a few plantations, owned by some of the best families in the State. As I was about to make myself known—seeing I was not the object of their coming—the negro, Pomp, called out:

"There they is now, Massa Arnold," and the fervent

"By George, you are right," proved that the young man took a deep interest in the coming of those whom he expected.

From my position, back from the bank, I could not discover the approach of the other party; but, soon, two men came up the steep ascent from the river, and joined the others, a slight salute only passing between them.

Then, for the first time, it struck me that a duel was to be fought. Intently I gazed upon the new-comers. One was a tall, heavily-made man of about forty, with light hair and mustache, and the other was a negro.

"You are ready, then, sir?" said the man whom Pomp had referred to as St. John Bartlette, and his voice was harsh and cold.

"I am always ready to meet you, Mr. Bartlette; though I like not this mystery—this spot—with no seconds but our servants," answered the young man.

"There will be less to witness the sad scene," returned Bartlette, in a mocking tone; and, feeling that I could remain concealed no longer, I advanced from the shadow, saying:

"There must be one more witness, gentlemen."

All started, and Bartlette asked, impudently:

"Why this intrusion, sir?"

"I might ask the same question, for you, not I, intrude. I have been hunting some days, in these mountains. Yonder is my wigwam, my horse and my dog. Hence, this is my castle."

"Pardon me, sir? I thought your presence was an intentional intrusion," returned Bartlette.

"Now that you are here, perhaps you will be kind enough to aid us in our arrangements in this unpleasant matter?" asked Arnold.

"With pleasure, gentlemen; but, is there no way in which an amicable settlement may be gotten at?"

"None, sir, whatever. Mr. Arnold Avery is, with myself, attached to the same lady; we can not both marry her, and I do not consider this world large enough for the man who rivals me, and myself to live in. Hence my challenge to this gentleman."

"Upon your just reasoning, Mr. Bartlette, that two can not marry the same lady, permit me to suggest that it be left with her, which to select, for this seems a decidedly strange way of disposing of a woman's affections to suit one's self," I remarked.

"I do not ask for your suggestions, sir," gruffly returned Bartlette, while his rival answered, pleasantly:

"I was willing to leave the decision to Miss Stanford, but Mr. Bartlette has not only insulted me, but challenged me, and I am willing to abide his pleasure. This illegal manner of arranging a meeting between gentlemen, with only our servants as witnesses, also emanated in the brilliant brain of this gentleman."

The latter was said with a satirical ring that made Bartlette flinch, but a moment after he returned:

"This postponement gains nothing; as you are here, sir, you may as well arrange the preliminaries between us—that is, if you will be kind enough so to do."

"I certainly should not permit this duel to go on, without some one to see that all is right, and, as you say, now that I am here, I will act for both of you."

The arrangements were soon made; and, as it was now midnight, the moon shone with its greatest brilliancy, and lit up the scene like day.

Pistols had been selected, and I stepped off the fifteen paces, and placed the principals, both of whom were perfectly cool, Arnold Avery particularly so, in their positions.

Turning to the negro, Pomp, to tell him and his companion to take a position to one side, I saw a tear trickle across his dark cheek, and he said:

"Oh, sir, if Massa Arnold gets killed, what will his poor mother do? And there's Miss May Stanford, it will break her heart, for she don't love that cruel Bartlette."

"Your master is cool, Pomp, and I suppose is a good shot; so trust for the best," and as I spoke I could not help wishing that he would be the fortunate one, for Bartlette's manner had impressed me unfavorably, and from what I had learned, I believed he was an unsuccessful rival, and revenge alone had prompted his challenge to young Avery.

All was now in readiness, and stepping to one side I called out:

"Gentlemen, are you ready?"

"Aye!" "Ready!" came from both men, and then I continued:

"One! two! three! Fire!"

The flash and report of both pistols were simultaneous, and for an instant after, neither principal moved, and then the pistol of Arnold Avery dropped from his hand, and he fell forward upon his face.

"Here, Jack, I am wounded; tie this handkerchief around my arm," came in stern tones from St. John Bartlette, while without a thought of him, I spurng forward and raised Arnold Avery from the ground. Poor fellow, he was already dead; the ball had pierced his heart.

Turning to St. John Bartlette, who was looking calmly down upon his work, I asked:

"Are you much hurt, sir?"

"The ball shattered my arm, above the elbow; will you attend to the body of Mr. Avery, and inform his mother of the sad affair, for I must go home quickly?"

"I will, sir—good-evening," I answered, with no sympathy for the man.

"I thank you, sir, and for your kindness in my behalf. I live seven miles below here on the river, and will be glad to see you at my house. Come, Jack," and together they entered the boat and rowed swiftly down the river.

"Well, Pomp, we have a sad duty to perform," I said to the weeping negro.

"Yes, massa, and how to tell old missus of her poor boy's death," sobbed the faithful servant.

We soon decided to leave my horse and dog in my camp, to be sent for in the morning, and to take the body in the boat, and convey it to its home, five miles below, on the river, when I would break the sad news to the mother of the dead man.

Urged by the strong arms of Pomp, the small-boat sped swiftly down the moon-lit river, bearing its sad burden, and in less than an hour I saw the white glimmer of a house through the trees, and soon landed upon a broad lawn, that spread away toward the house.

Calling up one of the negroes, Pomp told him to conduct me to the house, and tell the mistress that I wished to see her.

But, need I dwell upon the sad shock to that doting mother; on the funeral on poor Arnold that followed; the conversation I had with May Stanford, to whom the dead man was secretly engaged, and of the indignation in the neighborhood felt toward St. John Bartlette? No; of these I will not speak, but merely add that I called once upon St. John Bartlette, to advise him to leave the country for a short while; I found him wan and pale from suffering, for he had lost his arm, but stern and determined to brave the storm.

He knew then that he had lost May Stanford, for a bitter letter from her, in answer to one he had written to her, excusing himself for his act, informed him how she detested him: and there, in his beautiful home, with every luxury around him, he now lives, a cynical, disappointed man, possessing few friends, and finding in life but little contentment and no happiness.

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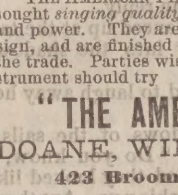

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SATURDAY ★ JOURNAL.

A WEAK APPETITE.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

You ask on what victuals I fare,
  A topic I think I had best shun,
And to tell you the truth I declare
  You have put me a difficult question.
But promise on oath that you'll keep
  What I tell to yourself, like a man, sir,
Nor whisper it even in sleep,
  And I'll hurry along with my answer.

For breakfast, I couple myself
  To a couple of cups of good Java,
As strong as a cast-iron shelf
  And a little bit thicker than gravy;
On this I find best to commence,
  For it makes my voracity calmer,
Then a beefsteak, cut sharp at both ends,
  I send home with a blow of the hammer.

Then I'm ready for soup, which is made
  Of the daintiest bits of a chicken,
And milk, and stirred well with a spade,
  And some brickbats are added to thicken.
It boils then for maybe an hour,
  I don't think it ever boils over—
An hour—then molasses I pour
  In to make it as sweet as a lover

Then I put in three sticks of good wood—
  In the stove, say, and with an umbrella
I stir till it's boiled down quite good—
  Till it's boiled clear down into the cellar.
Then I put in some soda, and soon
  It comes up the steps unto fast time,
And then with a two-handed spoon
  I put it all down for the last time.

Then I study a minute to see
  What direction my appetite's taken,
And between us we mayhap agree
  Upon a fried volume of Bacon.
And then a peeled orange I eat,
  And perhaps a pealed bell, nicely roasted,
Some wine then I take for a treat,
  And perhaps some cold pigs' feet, well toasted.

Then a brace of fried martins perhaps
  Go down with a couple of swallows,
And a delicate stew of trunk straps,
  To sharpen my appetite, follows;
And then I absorb at a toss
  A dozen or two of tomatoes,
While I relish a couple of rows
  Of pins or assorted potatoes.

And then, for fear I should show
  Some signs of becoming a glutton,
I eat a small loaf of baked dough
  And a little hind-quarter of mutton,
Along with the least pound of cheese
  And the least little pickled ox gizzard,
A buttered hat-rack if 't agrees,
  And then I am ready for dessert.

Some people make hogs of themselves
  By too much overcrowding and filling;
You will find, if you look on my shelves,
  I'm a moderate eater—but willing.
When I dine I've the same bill of fare,
  Unless I am under the weather,
And then, to be frugal and spare,
  I have two of them pasted together!

Unwelcome Visitors:

OR,

A NIGHT ABOARD A WRECK.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.

The ship Wilderness sailed in 18—, from New York, for the Monravian Settlement, on the African coast.

The captain was a fine, intelligent young fellow, named Cartwright, who, only a few months since, had married Caroline Hunter, a sweet girl of eighteen, as good as she was beautiful.

He had intended to perform his voyage alone, not caring to subject her to the perils of the sea; but Caroline had coaxed him into letting her go, too.

About seven weeks later, the wind came on to blow a heavy gale to the eastward, driving the ship towards the African coast, which was in sight.

Nearer to it the vessel, which seemed a doomed craft, drew every moment. Cartwright got down both anchors, and vainly tried to hold her.

On she went.

Directly ahead of him, however, there was a broad stream, extending inland.

He directed the ship into this, and was about anchoring under the lea of a headland, when she struck a sunken rock, and went down to the bottom, which brought the water just on a level with her decks, some of it pouring in, while her bows were buried in a marsh to the left—a broad, slimy tract. The headland sheltering his vessel from the gale, he said he would remain aboard, if his officers and men would take to the boats, and go to the settlement—thirty miles distant—to bring assistance to take out his cargo.

They departed next morning, leaving Cartwright and his wife the only occupants of the ship.

"What are those things out there in the swamp?" inquired Caroline, pointing to a number of objects, resembling the bark of trees.

Cartwright, glancing carelessly in that direction, said they were logs of wood.

"But I'm sure I just saw one of them move!" said Caroline.

The captain smiled.

"Mere fancy," he replied.

They sat down on the quarter-deck, and, after conversing awhile, he procured a book, and read to her for several hours.

Meanwhile, a fog had gathered, hiding the swamp from their view.

Night came, and Cartwright lighted the ship's lantern, his wife keeping near him all the time. Once he saw her shudder.

"You are not frightened?" said he.

"I don't know why it is, but I do feel a little frightened," was the reply.

As she spoke, she glanced up at the tall masts, towering grimly into the shadows above.

Cartwright endeavored to laugh away her fears.

"Those swaying shadows of the sails," said she, pointing up. "Do you know, I have several times fancied they looked like savages, aloft there, watching us. Are there no savages about this place?"

"I don't know," he answered; "but do not fear. I hardly think they could wade to us through the swamp."

"They might come in canoes."

Cartwright laughed.

"I have a good pistol aboard," said he; "but we will not borrow trouble about savages."

He procured his pistol, and sat down at the foremast. His wife shrunk closely to his side, one arm thrown over his knee, her head resting against his breast.

"Hark!" she suddenly exclaimed. "What was that?"

It was a strange, hoarse, gurgling cry; a sort of croaking noise, such as neither of the two had ever heard before.

First it came, apparently, from one throat; then it was caught up by another and another, until the damp, foggy atmosphere seemed alive with unearthly beings.

"Savages!" gasped Caroline.

Cartwright answered, however, that the voices were not those of savages; to quiet her fears, he stated that he believed they came from some bird peculiar to that coast.

The strange noises drew nearer every moment. Cartwright would have taken his trembling wife into the cabin, but it was full of water. In fact, even the decks, fore and aft, were submerged, the captain having been obliged to spread a number of coils of rope to secure a dry place for his wife and himself.

He now rose, and walking as far forward as he could get, peered through the darkness. He could, however, see nothing, although the mysterious noise came from that direction.

He returned to Caroline; as he did so, the croaking ceased.

Hours passed, and it was not resumed. Caroline's feelings were quieted by Cartwright's assurance that it was some harmless animal, and she at length fell asleep in his arms.

The captain, half an hour later, was looking fondly down upon the sweet face nestling against him, when again he heard that strange croaking.

It was now much nearer than before, and, suddenly glancing at the bow, he beheld a sight which, for a minute, held him mute and motionless.

First he saw the gleaming of a pair of small, lurid eyes; then a dark-looking mass drew itself slowly over the submerged bow, and crept toward him along the deck.

As it drew nearer, the rays of the lantern fell full upon it, revealing the long, scaly body and disgusting proportions of a huge crocodile!

The jaw was now open—the sharp fangs were disclosed—the eyes gleamed like great red beads!

Cartwright waked Caroline, and started to go aft with her, intending to deposit her upon the round house, where she would be out of danger.

Judge of his horror and dismay, however, when he discovered that his passage was barred by another of the disgusting monsters, which, it was evident, had crept over the bow to windward, thus escaping his attention, owing to the darkness in that quarter, and to his glances having been directed ahead of him.

In this dilemma, he rushed to leeward, depositing Caroline in the lee-rigging, and bidding her cling to it for her life. Ere he could follow, one of the crocodiles was within a foot of him, making a snap at him, so that he was obliged to spring to one side.

He discharged his pistol at the monster, but the ball glanced harmlessly off its scaly coat.

Then he caught up an oar, lying on deck, and, as the crocodile came toward him, he drove it down the creature's throat with all his might.

"The other! the other!" screamed Caroline.

He turned, to see the other crocodile about grasping him in its jaws.

In fact, the monster would have succeeded but for Caroline, who, roused to heroism by her husband's danger, picked up a long pole she saw on deck, and drove it into the crocodile's mouth.

The animal, however, snapped the pole in twain with its sharp teeth; then a portion of the young woman's dress was caught by its fangs, and it was drawing her, shrieking, toward itself, when Cartwright, snatching the cook's ax from the galley, dealt it a tremendous blow, which half-severed its head from its body.

By this time he was surrounded by his foes; the decks were alive with crocodiles, and he could only escape by fighting a passage through them for Caroline and himself to the weather fore-rigging.

He laid about him vigorously, but his foes, snapping at him from all sides, rendered the contest a doubtful one.

Step by step, however, he was drawing nearer the rigging, when the blade of the ax loosened and flew from the handle!

A huge crocodile yawned in his path; another was behind him!

He caught Caroline in his arms, and succeeded, by a spring sideways, in leaping over the first-named of his foes. Both, however, now rushed toward him, but he had gained the rigging, and deposited Caroline on the rail.

"Quick!" she shrieked. "Look out, behind you!"

He sprung upon the rail. As he did so, something glided along the pants of his left leg, tearing them to shreds, and taking off his slipper!

He turned, to discover that it was the fangs of one of the crocodiles, which he had thus narrowly escaped, leaving his slipper in the monster's mouth.

With his wife, he now mounted to the foretop, looking down at the disgusting creatures, swarming on the decks, uttering gurgling croaks of disappointment, and angrily beating the planks with their scaly tails!

All night long he and Caroline remained in the top. At daylight, his shipmates arrived, and soon, with hatchets and axes, put the crocodiles to rout.

A week later the ship's cargo was safely conveyed to the settlement. Cartwright remained there with his wife a few days, then sailed with her for home.

A few years later he retired from the sea, much to the joy of his wife, who had seen enough of a sailor's perils on that terrible night among the crocodiles.

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"B'iling" a Foe.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

"WELL, boyees, ef I must I must, but, dang it all, I don't *ree*colleck enny yarns as is worth the tellin'," said Old Red.

"Pshaw, Red, thet stick won't float! You knows more'n a hunderd. I've hearn yer tell 'em myself," cut in one of the boys.

"Thet's jess edzackly it, yer see! I've tole 'em all, an' tharfore don't want to travel ther same trail over ag'in. But hold on a minit! Did I ever tell enny uv you fellers how my ole woman an' sum uv the gals from the neighborhood went fur them chaps as kim down on 'em one night in the sugar camp?

"Never tole it, eh? Well, then, I will."

"Blaze away, old hoss!" cried some one.

"Yer see, it took place when I wur northin' but a bit uv a youngster. We war livin' up on Buffler Crick, in ole Kaintuck, an' as ther weather war in order, fust rate, all hands war out in ther sugar groves a-tappin' the trees, ketchin' the water an' b'ilin' it down in ther big kittles, fur to make long an' short sweet'nin's.

"Ther camp war right plum in the middle uv ther grove; it war a whoppin' big grove, too, an' the trees war so thick thet yur couldn't hear a feller holler, nor a rifle crack, much over a hunderd yard.

"Well, we hed been hard to work fur three nights, an' the next one, the fourth, war to wind up the frolick, es ther trees wouldn't bleed no more, 'sides which we hed about es much truck es we knowed what to do with.

"So ther old woman she sends 'round an' axes a lot uv the gals an' young fellers over fur to hev a reg'lar fandango *an'* bile sugar-water.

"Es luck would hev it, it kem on to rain thet arternoon, so thet thar warn't menny uv the young folks arriv, but what thar wur, wur uv the right stock, es you'll say yerself afore I gets through.

"At sundown it cl'ared off, an' by nine o'clock the moon riz. It wur a full one, an' war bright es day. The way the boyees an' gals worked at them sugar troughs war a caution, fur, yur see, thar warn't no dancin' till the last drop war b'iled down.

"Well, we war stirrin' an' firin' away like blazes, when, all uv a suddent, Ike Bundy's dog, Fun, opened down in the timmer, an' purty soon Ike kem chargin' back wi' the news thet the dog hed tree'd a whoppin' big painter, over on the edge uv the harricane.

"Yur oughter seen the scramble the boyees hed fur the'r rifles, an' the way they traveled to see who'd git the fust shot at the varmint.

"Every mammy's son uv 'em leff camp, an' I war fixin' to foller, when the ole woman grupped me by the collar, an' fetched me up all standin'.

"'Whar yur gwine?' sed she, givin' me a shake.

"'Down yander whar the painter holed,' sez I, sulky like.

"'All the fellers ar' goin', an' they'd laugh at me,' I sed ag'in, my dander beginnin' to git up a bit.

"By this time the party war off, leavin' on'y the women, an' gals, an' me in camp, which, es soon es I see, I begin puttin' on airs, an' sed I war thar to see thet none uv 'em *didn't git hurt.*

"Arter the young fellers hed all gone arter the painter, the gals begin carryin' on like all mad, never mindin' me a bit more'n ef I warn't thar. All uv a suddent, while they war at the'r wust, two black-muzzled, ugly-lookin' cusses es ever yer see, an' heeled plum up to the'r teeth, kem outen the brush, an' walkin' right up to the ole woman's kittle, told her to hand 'em out a good lot uv the sweet'nin's. Now, yer see, when the ole man war alive, *he* usen to try ther bluff game on the ole woman, but ev'ry time he did it, he found thet she hilt the best hand, an' allers called him a *lee*tle above his pile.

"Now, then, ther ole man war a rough 'un, an' yer kin bet thar war many a tight scrummage fou't, but ma'am allers, es I sed, raked the stakes.

"Sech bein' the case, what chance do 'ee think thet a stranger hed o' skeerin' *her?* Not the least bit *in* the world, an' she jess ups an' tells the skunk thet he couldn't hev nary a drap, not ef his belly war a-dryin' up fur the want uv it.

"Thar war nine o' them gals, 'sides the ole woman—stout, buxom gals, too, an' jess es game es a Mexikin brass-back, an' eekelly es willin' fur a buckle.

"Fur a minit er two the black-mouthed vill'in stood a-lookin' at the ole woman, an' then, snatchin' a big gourd, he started to go to one uv ther kittles to holp hisself.

"Ef ever enny uv ye see a mad bob-tail wildcat, yer kin jess tell what my ole woman looked like es she grupped a good-sized club an' got atween the chap an' the kittles.

"With this, the durned skunk got his back up, an' started to draw a weepin, when Betsy Rumer, ole Cole's darter, who's es big es a hoss, ketched up a bit uv fence-rail, an' straightened *him* out stiff.

"Things war lookin' squally fur them chaps, fur the whole uv 'em war makin' to surround t'other chap, when all at onct he blowed a keen note through his fingers, an' right away two more uv ther same sort sailed out uv ther bushes, an' drawin' the'r pistols, kem on an' j'ined thar cumrad.

"'Them's too menny,' sez I to myself, an' away I slips down to whar the fellers war, all uv 'em makin' sech a racket, thet what with it, an' the yelpin' uv ther dog, an' the screechin' *uv* ther painter, they couldn't 'a' heard it thunder ten feet off.

"Thet's the reason they hadn't heard Auguster Greenbury's squalls when the row fust commenced. She allers *did* do the squallin', Auguster did, an' her woice wur a mighty one.

"Yur bet I traveled hard, an' when I got thar, I war so knocked up thet I couldn't talk, nohow, but I managed by p'intin', an' mouthin', an' grimmacin', to make 'em onderstan' thet somethin' war wrong up at the camp; 'sides which, jess at thet minit, Auguster opened ag'in, an' *thet* war talk enuff.

"Away they went in a mob, tryin' to git back a heap faster'n they came, one uv 'em, 'twar 'Lije Ash, draggin' me along by ther neck.

"We warn't long in re'chin' ther battle-ground; we could hear 'em, though, afore we kem in sight, an' when we did, I wish I may die ef it warn't both the funniest *an'* the skeeriest sight thet a feller could see. Talk about mad men! Pshaw! they can't hold a taller dip to a a passel uv women wi' the'r backs well up.

"Two uv them 'ere chaps war layin' on the ground still es a skinned 'possum; anuther one war tied fast to a tree, while t'other one, the fourth chap, war in the hands uv the whole lot uv mad hornets, fightin', an' cussin', an' t'arin', but all wi'out enny good.

"They war draggin' him to a big kittle full uv b'ilin' water, an' we all see, an' so did ther feller, what they war up to.

"'Goin' to souse him, by jingo!' said 'Lije Ash.

"An', shore enuff, they war, an' *did.*

"They got ther skunk to the edge uv ther kittle, an' seizin' him by the head, ha'r an' feet, they bodyaciously lifted the poor devil up, an' sot him down into thet awful b'ilin' truck.

"I don't never want to hear sech a scream es the skunk give. They didn't mean to kill him, but he war found dead in a cave whar they hed hed head-quarters. They war a gang uv robbers an' hoss-thieves, an' by good luck it war the'r capt'in thet the gals hed b'iled.

"It broke up ther gang, the other three bein' sent into Bardstown, whar they war tried an' sent to the penitent'ery.

"Yer kin all bet high thet thar warn't no more sugar camps disturbed in thet section uv kentry, fur this saltin' down into a kittle uv b'ilin' water *hain't* no joke, enny way yer kin fix it."

Short Stories from History.

Heroic Deeds.—Among the memorable deeds of men in times past, which our young men should strive to emulate, if they would become persons in history, are the following:

A captain of the name of Douglas, who commanded the Royal Oak, when the Dutch sailed up the Medway, had received orders to defend his ship to the last extremity, but none to retire; and therefore when his ship was set on fire, he chose rather to perish in her than quit his station, exclaiming, heroically, "A Douglas was never known to quit his post without orders!"

The famous Duke of Albemarle, who was equally distinguished in naval and military exploits, possessed personal courage in the highest degree. When the Dutch fleet approached Chatham, the duke, apprehending they would land, exposed himself to the hottest of their fire, that his example might keep others to their duty, and defeat the design of the enemy. When a person of distinction expostulated with him on the danger to which he exposed himself, and would have persuaded him to retire, he answered very coolly, "Sir, if I had been afraid of bullets, I should have quitted the trade of a soldier long ago."

In a Scottish regiment, at the battle of Waterloo, the standard bearer was killed, and clasped the colors so fast in death, that a sergeant in trying to no purpose to rescue them, on the near approach of the enemy, made a violent effort; and throwing the dead corpse, colors and all, over his shoulders, carried them off together. The French seeing this, were charmed with the heroism of the action, and hailed it with clapping and repeated shouts of applause.

At the battle of Senef, the Prince of Conde sent word to Marshal de Nevailles to be ready to engage the enemy. The messenger found him hearing Mass. On this being reported to the prince, he muttered something in abuse of over-pious persons. But the marquis having performed wonders during the engagement, said after it to the prince, "Your highness, I fancy, now sees that those who pray to God, behave as well in battle as their neighbors."

The gallant Admiral Benbow, when engaged with the French fleet commanded by Du Casse, was shamefully deserted by the captains of several of his vessels, at the moment when there was the best prospect of a glorious victory. Two of these captains were afterward shot for cowardice, and the others cashiered. In the heat of this engagement, and when he was wounded, one of his lieutenants consoled him for his misfortune. "I am sorry for it, too," said the gallant Benbow; "but I would rather have lost both my legs, than have seen this dishonor brought on the English nation; but hear me, should another shot deprive me of life, behave like men, and fight it out while the ship can swim." The admiral was obliged to have his wounded leg amputated, and this operation causing a fever, he died soon after, regretting in his last moments the misconduct of his captains, which had robbed him of so fair an opportunity of rendering an eminent service to his country.

In the reign of William the First, a Norwegian soldier maintained the passage of a bridge for several hours, against the whole of the English army. Forty of the assailants fell under his arm, and he was only overcome at last by one of them getting under the bridge, and, unseen, thrusting a spear through his body.

The Earl of Warwick, commonly called the "King Maker," from the facility with which he created and deposed monarchs, during the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, lived in a style of magnificence and hospitality, of which no period, perhaps, furnishes an example. No less than thirty thousand persons are said to have lived daily at his board, in the different manors and castles which he possessed; and the military, allured by his hospitality, as well as his bravery, were strongly attached to his interests. This distinguished warrior fell at the battle of Barnet, in 1471, when, owing to the mistake of one part of his army falling upon the other, during a fog, he was defeated by Edward the Fourth. In former battles, Warwick had always fought on horseback, that he might at once ride along the line, and perceive the particulars of the action; but on this occasion he determined to fight on foot, that his soldiers might see that he was resolved to share with them the dangers of the day. It was this gallant resolution which was the great cause of his defeat; for could he have been personally present in those places where directions and assistance were wanted, the accident would, in all probability, not have happened. After having exerted himself as an officer and a hero, in fruitless attempts to turn the tide of fortune in his favor, he rushed into the hottest part of the battle, and fell, covered with wounds. His brother, Montacute, in endeavoring to save him, met with a smilar fate.

Sir Cloudesley Shovel, whose melancholy shipwreck on the rocks of Scilly is well known, was, when a boy, on board a ship commanded by Sir John Narborough, who, during an action, expressed a very earnest wish to have some orders of consequence conveyed to a ship at a considerable distance. Shovel, hearing this, immediately undertook to convey it; and this he actually performed, *swimming through the enemy's line of fire, with the dispatches in his mouth.*

The Austrians, the Poles, and the Venetians, having formed a powerful league against the Turks in 1686, the Polish general entered Moldavia, and posted himself in front of the fortress of Nemez, which had been abandoned by all the inhabitants, and left to only nineteen Moldavian chasseurs, who had the hardihood to remain. These brave men raised the bridges, shut the gates, and refused to surrender. The Poles, who were ignorant of the state of the garrison, cannonaded the place for four days. The chasseurs defended themselves with vigor, killed a great number of the besiegers, and, in particular, the master of the artillery. On the fifth day, having lost ten of their comrades, they demanded to capitulate. An honorable capitulation was granted to them, with permission to go where they chose. As soon as the capitulation was signed, six men came out of the garrison, bearing on their shoulders three others who were wounded. At this spectacle, sentiments of admiration, of shame, and of rage, succeeded each other in the breast of the Polish general. He remained for a moment speechless; but the sense of honor bound him to his engagement, and he dismissed these brave men with the highest eulogium on their courage.

The character of the very unfortunate Duke de Mentmorenci, whom Cardinal Richelieu persecuted to death, seems to have been composed of the virtues that should distinguish high rank, courage and liberality. When after the fatal battle of Castelnadauri, he was brought, wounded in many places, to be examined before the parliament of Thoulouse, he asked the officer who had taken him prisoner, how he could identify his person? "Alas! my lord," replied he, with tears in his eyes, "the flames and the smoke with which you were covered prevented me at first from distinguishing you; but when I saw in the heat of the engagement, a person who, after having broken six of our ranks, was still killing some of our soldiers in the seventh, I thought that he could be no one except the Duc de Montmorenci; but I did not certainly know that he was the person, till I saw him stretched upon the ground, with his horse dead upon him!"

C. Mævius, a centurion in the army of Augustus Cæsar, having, after many gallant achievements in the open field, been surprised by an ambuscade, was carried to Alexandria, and presented to Antony. "How would you," said Antony, "that I should deal with you?" "Instantly," said Mævius, "take away my life, for neither by saving it, nor by the punishment of any kind of death, can I ever be brought to forget my allegiance to Cæsar, and become a soldier of thine." Antony was so pleased with this intrepid answer, that he spared his life, and would have loaded him with favors, if the integrity of Mævius would have allowed him to receive them.